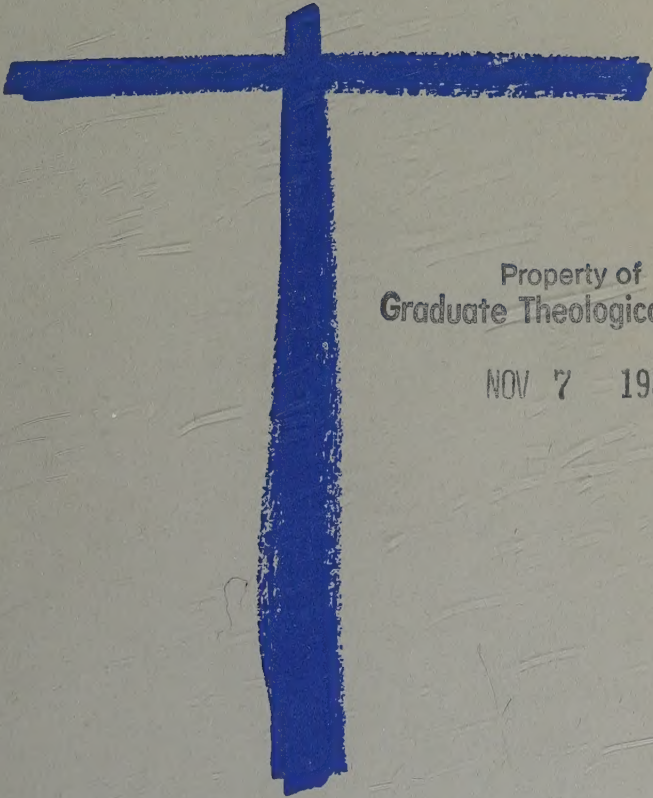


Franciscans Today

The Franciscan



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The Society of Saint Francis

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Minister General C.S.F.: Sister Cecilia C.S.F.

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Pax et bonum

THE FRANCISCAN

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Book Announcement

Fulness of Joy. *By Brother Ramon S.S.F.*
Marshall Pickering. Paperback. 243pp. £5.95.

This new book completes a Trilogy on spirituality by Ramon, and those who have read the two earlier books, *A Hidden Fire* and *Deeper into God*, will certainly want to read the third. Joy is at the heart of Christian experience, but paradoxically and inextricably linked with sorrow. This book follows contemplatively the great themes of the Gospel in human experience, with three last chapters on death and glory. It is full of a theology which is based in human experience and overflows with joy.

Published June 1988

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The unchanging face of Clare House at the Hilfield Friary.



Franciscans Today



THERE is a nostalgic flavour about this issue of THE FRANCISCAN, because it is the last one in the format which has become familiar during thirty years. So we could not resist the urge to look back at the past and to see how S.S.F. has fared in the mean time. But it is not meant to be just a chat among the old cronies about the good old days. It is something much more like stocktaking. And this makes it directly relevant to the General Chapter at Hilfield, which will take place just a couple of weeks before you receive this magazine.

Stocktaking means taking time to work right through the stores and see which items are selling well, and so should be maintained or even increased, and which items are dead stock, and should be sold off cheaply and discontinued. The object is to ensure a healthy cash flow by capitalizing on the popular lines and meeting the trends of the market. But this is not merely a matter of responding to public demand, but the much more subtle process of creating the demand for the goods which we have to sell. Often it is not the commodity itself that has to be changed, but the packaging which makes it attractive to the potential purchaser.

Our chief commodities are humility, love and joy. The store is a community under vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. It is an environment which counts the cost and knows the personal discipline and self-sacrifice which alone ensure the quality of our products. Though we offer them, like the prophet of Isaiah 55, for purchase without money and without price, it is not easy to find buyers in the present climate of resistance to the claims of the gospel and cynicism concerning its benefits. Only in a community that gives practical evidence of the gospel in its common life and in its works of love for humanity does the faith become something to be reckoned with seriously for many people today. To be true to our vocation, S.S.F. must ever strive with the help of God to be exemplary in our community living, an inspiration to others, especially our Tertiaries and Companions, and a credible witness to the world. For these purposes the inner reality is indispensable, but it is also essential to get the packaging right. That may mean change.

The following pages show that there have indeed been great changes in the last thirty years. But there will be more to come. From next January THE FRANCISCAN will be an example of new packaging to meet today's demands, a sign of our determination to get the stock out of the basement and onto the open shelves.

The Minister General's Letter

My dear friends,

I went down to the little library we keep in the basement, looking for a book and got trapped — by a box of old FRANCISCANS. A reminder has just come in the post, to send my piece for the 'last' FRANCISCAN before 10 July and here under my hand was the number for June, 1969.

That year I wrote from Africa as Provincial Minister visiting the brothers in Fiwila. How well I remember that visit: Desmond's amazing gardens — he was professed that year, the first brother to be professed in Africa; a trip to Kabwe with Aidan, sliding through the mud for mile after mile, with three desperately sick patients strapped to stretchers in the back; the long prayerful liturgy and devout silences of Holy Week.

It was an eventful year. There was an account of the First Order Chapter with brothers from America attending for the first time. The appointment is announced of Brother Bernard as Guardian of the Brisbane Friary, and we are told that 'Brother Donald has had a busy time with Missions and Lent courses' — well, some things never change!

Brother David, who had gone to live in America, had the difficult task in his letter as Minister General of recording the major changes we had made in our Constitutions — and the way this had led to the withdrawal of Brother Hugh, at that time the Novice Master. Those changes were far reaching, and the general policy decisions made at the First Order Chapter were the foundation of so much of our life today in the Community, not only in the European Province but throughout the Society. Our most recent changes to the Constitution are perhaps as significant. Time will tell. In June, 1969 we recorded that Geoffrey's mother died, just after he returned to the Pacific, as this time we must say with sorrow that Keith's father has died, so soon after his departure for the Solomons. Such sacrifices put into perspective the vocation we all share.

The house at Ashton got going that year to begin work with lads from Borstal, with Mark, now a monk at Crawley Down, Alison, at present in Australia, and Jerome, now in heaven. Another new venture Geoffrey wrote about is the house in New Zealand with Reginald in charge. So it was all 'go'. Perhaps we have learnt, and are still learning, a little flexibility. Flexibility with *integrity*, that was the general subject for the articles. There was a really good one by Alban on *Belief*, and another by

Bernard on *Saying 'Yes' with Integrity*, ending up 'Lord, help me to say "Yes"', — and that sounds like him as well. Douglas Rhymes and Alan Webster had good things to say, in fact it was an excellent edition altogether.

And of course there were pictures! The one at the end was of the brethren in Australia. Not all the novices or the postulant there remained in the Society and Illtyd went as well. But in the centre is a youthful Geoffrey, now in Haruro and a remarkably slim Rodney, now the Provincial in America who has recently become the Assistant Minister General. Sitting in front is Simon. Simon's death that year is recorded too; he fell while climbing. David Thorley preached movingly at his Requiem in Brisbane Cathedral on the text 'When I said my foot hath slipt: thy mercy, O Lord, held me up'. Simon and I knew each other intimately as friends before he joined us. His death was a sudden pain of a kind that never really goes. At his funeral I quoted some words of his which had made a profound impression on us all at the General Chapter in 1966. He gave a paper which was also a personal testimony, as true now as it was then, and will be in twenty years from now. He spoke of vision, as seeing things as they truly are in themselves and not for some other more selfish reason. He said, 'All these months I have been in Australia I have continually heard the refrain "What is your work going to be, what is your objective?" And more and more I tend to reply "Our work is to learn to try and live — and our objective is just Jesus"'.

'The Community exists because we need each other, and none of us can be whole or be saved without the other. What God has given us is not some law by which we can go about doing his work. He has given us each other!' Surely that too speaks for the future.

And so does the picture in the front. It is a group photograph of the first Novices Conference at Hilfield. There are twenty-seven brother novices and postulants, and four sisters, heavy with wimples and veils incidentally! Of the brothers, eleven are still in the Society and one of them, Sebastian, has died. Of the sisters, one is now the Guardian in San Francisco. The brothers engaged in a spirited demand to be allowed to wear a capuce, but there were other things of greater importance at stake. The sixties were a rebellious time, and the noviciate certainly didn't escape the upheaval. Twenty years later things look a little different, but the spirit of integrity remains.

I shall miss the old FRANCISCAN. It has served us well, as have the Editorial Board who never allowed the standards to fall, or the

circulation, but the other Provinces have been blazing a trail in communications which are informative, eye-catching and well illustrated. They have set a high standard for the European Province to follow. We look forward.

God bless you
with my love and prayers.

+ Michael ~~SSA~~.

Minister General.

Chronicle

Brother Anselm writes:—

EUROPEAN PROVINCE As it's summer in Scunthorpe I'm writing in the garden between the traffic noise from Normanby Road and playground noises from Grosvenor Street — but nonetheless in a green space which is at present peaceful.

I haven't forgotten that I'm writing for the last FRANCISCAN (in its present form), and I do so with an enormous and unqualified sense of gratitude, as I reflect on the past thirty years which are in different ways chronicled in its pages.

A big part of the thankfulness is due to the fact that this change is taking place not because of a falling circulation, but simply as the sort of development which can be seen in the life cycle of a butterfly — from the pupa emerges the adult. That's not to say that the new magazine is going to flit from flower to flower and then drop down dead — the adult lays eggs!

When the FRANCISCAN as we know it was a young caterpillar I was asked by the late Brother Peter to join the editorial board, and for ten years or so was on the inside of its mysteries. Now, each issue comes to

me as a lovely surprise, but it must be said that the shape of news, articles and book reviews has worn very well.

So — a very fond farewell. If the magazine has been your only source of information about our life in S.S.F. you would inevitably and understandably have a rather more rose tinted view of things than ours, who are in the thick of it all. Even so, those thirty years have been a time of real growth, development and blessing for all of us — for the brothers and sisters of our three orders, and for you, our many, many friends in the way of Saint Francis.

The General Chapter at the end of August began with an overview of those thirty years as the prelude to a consideration of our present situation — and then tried to glimpse the vision of what God has in store for the years ahead. For what emerged, you will have to wait for the January magazine — and that will be altogether another story!

ALNMOUTH **Events.** It might be wearisome if we wrote of all that had happened at Alnmouth since the last Chronicle, so we selected a few events for comment.

An outstanding event at the beginning of the period was a Quiet Day in preparation for Lent led by Denis. Some sixty people took part, and for the first time our new counselling room (known as the chatterbox) built in the Narthex was put to full use.

It was a great joy to have our Minister General with us for the 'Victory of Love', our Passover and Easter Celebration. This was followed on Easter Monday by Colin Wilfred's 'At Home' Day. The large numbers coming throughout the day were a tribute to Colin's ministry and popularity during his five years as Guardian. Colin left that evening for a short holiday before starting work in London to develop and manage a Day Centre for Body Positive, an organisation for those with HIV infection and A.I.D.S.

In May two events at the Friary proved very popular and were a great success, namely the 'Myers Briggs Typology' weekend, led by Dr. Kate Carr and David Stephen, entitled 'Me, You and God'. The second event was the 'Youth Day' led by Zacchaeus. This too was a memorable occasion.

A number of Religious came to celebrate Corpus Christi with us.

A Weekend of Painting and Prayer led by Richard and Sister Kathrine R.A. was much appreciated and is to be repeated next year. Sister Kathrine invited Richard to be chaplain for Painting and Prayer Retreats.

Then in the middle of June, God gave us lovely weather for our 'Summer Festival'. There were about 270 communicants at the Eucharist. The Revd. Jack Richardson, a long standing friend of the community here, preached a stirring sermon, not without great humour, about the real meaning of personal witness to Christ in our daily lives. After the Eucharist we were entertained by the Duchess High School band, and Peter Timothy's showing of Joe Homan's 'Boys' Town in India'. Richard's art display was

another attraction. One of his paintings sold for £30. Altogether it was a day for which we can truly say 'Praise the Lord'.

People. Zacchaeus and Giles David left us in May for Glasshampton. We enjoyed them being here and valued their contribution to our life.

Paul Michael has joined us for a while. His main work is in the kitchen, but he does have other skills! He has repainted very professionally the notices at the bottom of the drive 'The Friary of S. Francis' and 'No Coaches Please'.

Cecil has returned after nearly nine years in Liverpool. He says that it took quite a while to settle down in the quiet village of Alnmouth after roaming the streets of Liverpool. Many people remember him in Alnmouth and Alnwick. He has been attending a bird watching class and taking part in field trips.

It is very good to have Timothy back from Durham University for the vacation. He is to be congratulated on his exam results at the end of his first year, 2—1 in all subjects.

Noel Thomas, from the Australia and New Zealand Province, has been with us some months now. He has made a valuable contribution to our life here. He is always ready to give a hand and has exercised a ministry of counselling to many guests. He leaves for the Cambridge house soon and we wish him well.

Peter Timothy works all hours, despite remonstrations from the acting Guardian, but he has a remarkable ministry as guest brother. Nothing is too much trouble and the guests greatly appreciate his care and concern.

Ian has been back to hospital a couple of times but now seems better. From time to time he works in the laundry, and as bursar when Harry is away. He also has a valuable ministry to guests.

Harry has worked something of an economic miracle with the shop, turning a deficit into a splendid surplus. He continues to work all hours as bursar.

Mark Nicholas is receiving more and more invitations for away engagements, but manages to cope with all the office work as well.

The Guest wing Common Room is being refurbished and redecorated. Paul Anthony is working very hard on the planning and execution of the change.

David Stephen has refused invitations for away engagements while Acting Guardian, because he believes it is of primary importance for a Guardian to be at the Friary most of the time. He, and the rest of us, look forward to the arrival of Reginald from the Cambridge House in July to take over.

In our daily worship we have returned to a custom which had unfortunately lapsed, and the brothers now stay in chapel for thirty minutes of corporate silent prayer at the conclusion of Mattins.

SAINT MICHAEL'S, PADDINGTON

At the time of writing, (July) we are just beginning our search for somewhere else to live. Our licence expires next June ('89) and by then we hope to be settled in another house in London. Three of us have part-time work in central London, so we would very much like to find a new home near enough to our jobs to enable us to continue in them.

Joyce, as Provincial Secretary to the community, works mainly in the house, but also uses her counselling skills, both on behalf of various people who make appointments to see her, and at the S. Marylebone Healing Centre, where she gives one afternoon a week as a 'befriender'. She has been developing her creative skills in photography, and some of the photographs she took at Freeland have been turned into postcards which the Clares now sell. Her photographs of a recent conference at Liverpool, Celebrating Women in the Church, have been in demand not only by individuals who attended, but also by various church newspapers. Joyce has been a member of the household for three years.

Helen has now been in the house for eighteen months. Her profession at Holy Trinity House on 4 June was one of those occasions when people not only say they enjoyed themselves, but actually mean it. Helen's interest in liturgy was evident in the service, and she now finds herself regarded as 'liturgy adviser' when something special is needed. Apart from her involvement with Women In Theology (WIT) and her job with Westminster City Council, Helen is also an active member of the congregation of All Saints, Margaret Street.

Pamela arrived here last September, and began work almost immediately as a health adviser at a clinic for sexually transmitted diseases, attached to S. Mary's hospital, where much of her work involves counselling people before and after they are tested to see if they are HIV positive. She job-shares with a tertiary, Kate Partridge, who has become part of our extended family, frequently joining us for offices and meals. Pamela, Kate and Mary all enjoy attending local WIT meetings, held at Holy Trinity House.

Mary is the latest arrival. She came in March, and by April had a job as a secretary with The Churches' Council for Health & Healing, whose office is in the S. Marylebone Healing Centre where Joyce works. As she has been interested in the healing ministry for many years, Mary is delighted to have this opportunity to deepen her knowledge of it, and to make the acquaintance of others involved in this field. As a group, we share a commitment to welcoming people who are outside or on the fringes of the institutional church, particularly homosexuals, and also women for whom language issues are important. Partly as a development of this ministry, we are experimenting with our liturgy, attempting to create worship into which we can all, female and male, enter fully. We are also deeply committed to working on our community life, building up a relaxed, supportive and open atmosphere, to which other people can come for rest and recreation.

Family Day. Friday, 1 July was a family day here. Many of our **HILFIELD** brothers and sisters gathered for Brother John's requiem and interment. The sadness of his passing was contained within the thanksgiving for his faithfulness and fun and his long years of service and was all taken up into the mystery of the saving death and resurrection of the Lord. Anselm spoke simply and movingly about John. The long journey to the cemetery was matched by the long years of John's service, which were marked by the ringing of the bell. The Friary looked as we hope he would have approved; with hedges cut, the cemetery grass neat and some vegetables growing in the garden. It was especially good that some of those who had valued his ministry in Chetnole were able to be there, as well as many from further afield. After a simple lunch, people dispersed and others began to arrive for the clothing of four new novices at Evensong. Michael Coombes will be known as Robert,

Chris Jones as John Nicholas, Dunstan Thomas will retain his names, and Douglas Apps becomes Mark Douglas. It was rather beautiful to have the new life welcomed on the same day as the funeral. Some were in an individually directed retreat on the day too, which was conducted by Sister Helen of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, so in their quietness a further contribution was made to the day.

Provincial General Chapter. At the end of August we shall be welcoming about a hundred of our sisters and brothers for a week, in which we shall look together at our life, in all its variety of forms, and think about the future. We are grateful to have Bob and Jeanette Renouf as facilitators and that, in addition to the Ministers General of the sisters and brothers, there will be the Bishop of Hereford, our Protector, and the Mother of Freeland, with Sister Gillian Clare (who will be speaking on 'the inner journey') and representatives of the Third Order. Professor Charles Elliott and Bishop Peter Selby will be speaking, and we shall be working in small groups discussing 'Where we are now', 'What we could become' and 'How we move from the one to the other'. By the time this is read the Chapter will be over, but some may be able to get news of it if they come to the Stigmata Festival here on Saturday, 17 September at noon. The preacher will be Canon Robert Willis, the new Vicar of Sherborne, and Bishop John Neale of Ramsbury will preside and will speak in the afternoon on 'World Mission'. Bernard will give news from the Chapter. We hope that it will be a very great Stigmata Day. Please note, that though Brother Michael who was due to be at the Stigmata cannot come because of a chest operation, he is recovering well and we shall hope to have him with us another year.

Missions in summer and autumn. Amos is now well established here and is making a great contribution to the life. He is going on a September mission to Hadleigh, where we have many friends, many of them now connected with Philip Bartholomew and the youth camp. Our friend Father Chris Koch will be leading the mission and Julian Barbara (who is at the School at present) will be on the team. The Barnes mission was greatly blessed, and we are grateful for prayers and support, and likewise the Honiton and Walton mission led from here were a great source of joy. We hope to enable all the novices while they are here to have opportunity of 'going on a mission': not that these special events in any way replace the ongoing mission of the Church in each place, but they can be used to help and quicken that mission. Our Society has many different expressions of mission in its life. We had a visit from the Governor of Portland Youth Custody Centre, with Martin Kiddle, who has now moved to be Chaplain of the Cardiff prison; we are glad that we can help out in the interregnum in Portland in August.

The Hilfield team. It is important with so many comings and goings that there is a steady team in the middle to keep things going. When Bernard is away, John Francis heads up the team. Patrick, Roger and Kenneth all make a valuable contribution to the life in their various ways, Christopher is now the bursar, Amos looks after Bernard House, James is the assistant novice Guardian, and we look forward to welcoming Hugo, who in addition to looking after Francis House will do some Provincial work for Damian. Justin is very well, after a good holiday and Raphael seems to be beginning to be more himself. We will be sad for ourselves to see Paschal go off to S. Stephen's House, Oxford, in September, but we are delighted for him to have the opportunity of this two year course in preparation for ordination. He will be coming back in the holidays.

Re-thatch, etc. We have been very grateful to get Bernard House roof partially rethatched, Juniper and other houses painted, the new Clem Gault gas system completed and other work done on the friary, including the tarmacadamming of the drive. All this maintenance is very expensive, but necessary and we are grateful indeed to those who make the work possible, e.g. by donations to the Province or this house. We pray for our kind benefactors each day and, as we send out the FRANCISCAN, (soon to be in its new form) we pray for those who are receiving it.

Visitors. We have had many interesting visitors, including some monks from the Buddhist House at Honiton, and a young man from Egypt, (who has stayed for some months and who has endeared himself to us all), and two Turkish men who are living in Sweden, who again have brought a different spirituality. We know that the prayer life of the Friary is its very heart and are grateful to all who share it with us and help to build it up. We are always glad to welcome visitors here and the guest house is usually booked up for groups or individuals most of the year. As I write, the 'Consider your Call' weekend, will be followed by the Families Camp, the Youth Camp and the General Chapter.

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME Here . . . We have enjoyed being hosts to so many different groups, from the Bishop's staff meeting to some young people from the diocese of Qu'appelle, Canada, with which we are twinned as well as a group of local probation officers who come at regular intervals. The house and the Hermitage are well used, particularly when brothers and sisters come to stay — we rejoice at being used in this way.

In July we experienced involvement in joint ministry through a live broadcast from here on 'Approaches to Prayer', put out on Radio Stoke.

Edgar's involvement with the Guild of S. Stephen has brought us more new visitors and he has become well known in the locality because of helping out at various churches. His warm personality and readiness to have a laugh and a joke with people are much appreciated.

In August Eileen Mary guided a T.O. Ignatian residential retreat here and now she has been asked to work with a local priest guiding 'home-based retreats'.

We look forward to Joy's first profession on 21 August, which will mark a very special occasion in the life of all of us here. We hope her parents will be able to come from Guernsey as well as some friends.

Comings and Goings. We welcomed Sister Juliana from Hengrave Hall on her tour to experience Anglican community life — she soon became a fully participating member of this house during her stay. Cecilia stayed for two weeks in July during her visit to the province. Jacqueline is back! She stayed for two months before joining C.S.F. and has come for a similar stay to hold the fort here when we go to the General Chapter, but afterwards it's goodbye again when she leaves for London.

. . . And There. Eileen Mary has been away making visits to Bugbrooke and Gillingham prior to missions taking place there and Joy goes as a member of the mission team to Louth at the end of September.

We value our links with the sisters from Birmingham and look forward to growing links with the brothers in Liverpool, starting with a day visit there in July.

P.S. Our house festival is on 17 September — we look forward to seeing all of you who can come for that.

There is always change! The place changes and we have planned to
PLAISTOW renew the decaying temporary chalet accommodation at the bottom of the garden and to build a new chapel with access through the wall alongside the swimming pool. There have been consultations with architects and builders with estimates and second thoughts. Costs have soared and complications have arisen. Some of the work has already been started and holes have appeared in the ground outside the common room and there have been delays, hopes and postponements but now it seems likely that further work may well continue along 'Do-It-Yourself, with a little help' lines before the summer is out.

People change and so Silas after only a short sojourn with us has after frequent delays finally found his way for two years on loan to the Pacific Province and Papua New Guinea in particular. Beatrice has returned to Compton Durville and we are looking forward to the arrival of Jacqueline. Jonathan has now joined us in a vegetarian sort of way and is already well established amongst us. Frederick still potters along after many years of residence whilst old stagers Edward and Donald go to and come back from the extremities of the country on their various and frequent tasks and projects. Angelo is frequently called upon to advise on the 'AIDS' problem and to lead Missions and Retreats. The home team keep the place chuntering along with Patricia Clare, Julian, Austin, Edmund all coping valiantly with the Helping Hands project and doing most of the cooking and many of the house chores.

It all seems to happen and never seems to stop and hopefully we are still a House seeking to fulfil something of the Compassion envisaged by our founding predecessors within the neighbourhood and well beyond. We enjoy the company of many visitors and experience the generosity of many friends and for this we cannot but be extremely grateful.

Brother Philip Bartholomew writes:—

**SAINT FRANCIS SCHOOL,
HOOKE**

We are near the end of the summer term so both boys and staff are looking forward to the holidays, some with anxiety because of the unknown or insecurity that being away from school brings. Please pray for us as we, by the time you read this, start a new term and year. In this term we hope to welcome five new boys and a new member of staff, Rowland Wilkinson, from Kent, to take care of 'Rural Studies'.

In the past term we have said good-bye to seven boys: Joe, Jason, Kevin, Dean, Matthew, John and Mark. Please pray for them as they seek work and as they adjust to life away from Saint Francis School which, for most of them, has been their home for the past five years. We are delighted that Kevin has been accepted by 'Mercedes' as a car body builder and that Mark has been granted a place in a sixth form college in Kent. Pray that they all may know the love of Our Lord as they make this next step in their journey.

As I write I am reminded of Mr. N. Tate's paraphrase of psalm 34.

'Through all the changing scenes of life,
in trouble and in joy,

The praises of my God shall still My heart and tongue employ'.

In the past eight years I have seen many changes at this, our school, and it has also been my privilege to work with a great number of boys. So it seems fitting at the end of a term and year, that one should reflect on the great love which Our Lord has shown to us, and at the beginning of a New year we should all pray that Our Lord will continue to bless us and lead us in His way.

We, here, have much to praise God for! The boys and staff, the beauty of the place, and the opportunity to serve, to name but a few of His graces to us. Often those who work here find it difficult to go on praising God, in that they have to cope with a great amount of emotional disturbance and disruptive behaviour which can leave one feeling drained and feeling that one has nothing left to give. Yet experience has proved that when we turn to God and cast all our cares on Him, He does renew us and enable us to give more.

'O make but trial of his love:
experience will decide,
how blessed are they, and only they,
who in his truth confide'.

So continues Tate's paraphrase and I think it expresses our experience of the past year and I know that God's love has been fully tested and found to be true.

Earlier this year part of Juniper house was badly damaged by fire, and recently two boys, Stephen and Simon, suffered bad burns to the face and arms when their camping gas cooker exploded. In these and at other times of anxiety we have been very much aware of God's love and presence with us. Stephen and Simon have made a very good recovery, Juniper house has been repaired and is looking good! so praise God!

The Saturday after Easter brought a very happy event to Saint Francis School. Sue and Alistair Bates had their marriage blessed in our chapel. Alistair is a teacher and has been on the staff for a number of years. The service of blessing, conducted by Brother Arnold, was very moving and one felt that the young couple were declaring not only their love and commitment to each other but also to God. Please pray for Sue and Alistair as they journey through life together.

Open day 1988 was another happy event in our year. The chapel was packed for the Mass, standing room only! Brother Alan Michael's hard work in preparing the chapel and training the boy servers and intercessors and Sister Julian Barbara's work with her boy singers!, Brother Arnold's presiding and Brother Anselm's preaching all helped to make our 'open day Mass' a truly memorable event of our year. It was also wonderful to see so many 'old boys' and former members of staff and friends, and to share with them their love and celebration of Saint Francis School, Hooke.

'Fear him, ye saints, and you will then have nothing else to fear;
Make you his service your delight,
your wants shall be his care'.

So ends Tate's paraphrase of psalm 34, and while we know that we have a long way to travel before becoming saints, yet we also know that Our Father's care will hold us, no matter what happens, and that his love is true.

Life Begins at 70. Brother Hubert this month will have achieved his **BELFAST** three score years and ten. Our love and best wishes go to him, especially following another bout of sickness over the summer. Over the past twelve years while he has been in Belfast he has served on the other side of the town as an Assistant Minister in S. Thomas' Parish, Lisburn Road. Now Hubert has been asked by the Bishop to give a helping hand in two Parishes much nearer home — in Ardoyne and the Parish with which it is linked, Holy Redeemer, Shankhill Road, the latter being where Brother Timothy served for several years before he moved to Alnmouth.

Good-Byes. Brother Hugo moved from Belfast in July bound for Hilfield. He is going to be much missed. He certainly achieved a lot in a short space of time and it is difficult to recognise he was with us for under a year. Especially he fostered many contacts with the younger generation while also at the other end of the scale he managed to meet the Queen Mother at Hillsborough, on that occasion leaving the rest of us green with envy! His contribution in the Friary itself has been particularly appreciated. Not only has Hugo moved, he has also taken half an office with him, relieving Roger Damian of a substantial burden of work, taking up his new role of Assistant Provincial Bursar. Other major load-lifting has been consistently done by Brother Raymond Christian, for not only is he a wonderful assistant Chaplain in the Royal Victoria Hospital, but he has given himself unsparingly in the Leukemia Ward which carries such a heavy burden.

Healing Passed on. Brother David Jardine has not only been warmly welcomed home to Ulster, he has already been much in evidence in the context of the Ministry of Healing. Four training nights in May and June gathered over one hundred people for each session, representing thirty Parishes and more, on the practice of the ministry of healing. For our City and Province this is vital work, reaching down into the depths of people's need and promoting the Gospel at a practical level. Of course this has generated a new level of enthusiasm among the fifteen volunteers attached to The Mount, the Centre of this work for the Church of Ireland. David has also been asked to broadcast from time to time and recently he has completed four 'Thoughts for the Day' on Fridays which have to be delivered *live* on a topical issue at 6.55 and 7.45 a.m.

Young People. David Jardine and Bruno attended a Youth event across in County Fermanagh in July which attracted over five hundred young people. They came back very excited and encouraged: 'one of the best things in the Church of Ireland for years'. And what a sign of hope for our future! Under the name of Summer Madness (run on similar lines to Greenbelt in England) it ran for five days and by all reports five nights too! We hope that part of that Madness was a witness to our Franciscan vocation with the C. of I., helped along by a simple leaflet compiled by Hugo, 'Who are we?'

Locally. A complete day of sunshine at the Friary was the Companions Party in June which turned out to be very much a family occasion. The front lawn was adapted to an ad-hoc soccer pitch for a match energetically refereed by David Jardine while indoors the film *Brother Sun and Sister Moon* was shown on a borrowed video and TV set from next door! Playing and praying together and sharing a lovely meal seemed to satisfy everybody. The Friary is big enough to house about twenty-five, even if chaos ensues. After all, the people of Ulster lead the way in hospitality and generosity and it was lovely to return the compliment. The House itself is due for repair and there is a talk of

our needing to be rehoused while the Housing Executive do extensive renovations. Perhaps holy poverty will be our next corporate experience — but it's hard to imagine we'll lack anything with so many good friends surrounding us. Thank you for your prayers: don't stop!

LETTER FROM AMERICA

The American Province is a veritable United Nations, with Canadian, Caribbean, Australian, English and Japanese friars numbering almost half the province. Since the American friars amalgamated with S.S.F. in 1968, the province has elected ministers provincial from America, Canada, Scotland, England and now Australia, witnessing to the basic S.S.F. belief world wide, that our common vocation as Franciscans transcends nationalistic boundaries.

This all makes for a creative mix and delightful community folk law. For instance, it's now part of our oral history that while celebrating the American Independence Day mass at San Damiano Friary in San Francisco, English born celebrant, Brother Robert Hugh, realized not one of the assembled friars was American. So, typically with his wonderfully wicked sense of humor, Robert invented a new collect which gave thanks to God 'for giving such wisdom to his most gracious servant King George III, that he generously granted independence to his loyal colonial subjects!'

Our Irish friar, Brother David Jardine returned to Belfast in January. We felt a great loss. David had helped turn a rat infested, broken down Brooklyn building into the thriving S. Elizabeth's Friary. Fluent in Spanish, he walked the streets, knocking on doors to invite the kids to join the karate classes. The adults he cajoled into helping him establish an hispanic congregation.

Although he loved the American spirit and the vitality of the province, the call to return to his troubled homeland and do what he can towards healing of the troubles, won out. Au revoir, friend.

Trinidad is the most southern part of the province, so you will understand why I chose to pay my first visit before Christmas. Any excuse to get away from the New York winter. I preached in various parish centers and spoke to any group that would sit still for ten minutes! After Sunday mass, the Sanka family treated Desmond and me to a wonderful Indian feast. Six courses later we collapsed onto the couch only to have teenage son, Larry, discuss my sermon. I was impressed!

We didn't want to leave, but Des had to marry an elderly couple later in the afternoon, and was worried the gentleman might die before he tied the knot! As we said our farewells, the newly born Sanka grandchild, a beautiful little guy called Stephen, was placed in my arms for a blessing. I felt like a dad and was deeply touched.

Back home on the ranch in New York, we face the final run up to the presidential election in November. With a groan! Candidates seem to make more come backs than Dame Nellie Melba, while electioning has become a major industry. It's sad to think of all those political consultants out of work within a year. However their \$25,000 a week fee, should help them avoid the dole queues for a while.

Our annual Chapter meeting in May seems to pale in comparison to the political conventions. Professed friars travel from the three corners of the province, many of

them flying over three thousand miles. Brothers are excited that with little legislative business, three of the six days will be a conference led by Augustinian Father Paul Morrissey, on what makes us unique as Franciscans and how we renew our personal vocation. In a church where most Religious are Benedictine in spirit, the Franciscan charism is unique. We have a mission. I pray our new president will see his job in the same light.

RODNEY GODDEN S.S.F.

C.S.F.—AMERICA The house on Army Street has launched into some major projects over the last few months. Our resident builder, Sister Ruth, arrived there one morning and virtually dismantled one side of the chapel. Insulation was installed, single pane windows exchanged for double glazing and the whole room received a face lift — new paint, new color. Looks terrific! The chapel had long been a cause for concern. Situated at the front of the house, it faces onto one of the busiest streets in the Mission District. Prayer times coincide with the rush hours at either end of the day and the noise of trucks grinding up the hill finally pushed the sisters into action. The latest report is that these structural changes have somewhat lessened the din! The house now has a decent library. Ruth was called in once again and has built substantial shelving which accommodates the existing books and leaves room for additions. With spot lighting and a work table in place the library now provides a good study space.

We were very saddened to learn of the tragic death of our Bishop Wesley Frensdorff. Anne and Pamela represented C.S.F. at his funeral in Reno. We ask your prayers for Sister Anne. Her mother is terminally ill with a brain tumour and Anne is spending a few months in Arizona to help care for her. Cecilia left us at the end of May to begin her visitations to the C.S.F. houses around the world. She will be much missed after so many years of tireless service as Provincial. She returns in January.

Our ministries continue to challenge us. Ruth is running The Family Link at full capacity. Word has spread about the compassionate hospitality that guests receive.

Pamela Clare and Elizabeth Anne work to keep the Good Samaritan Center operating as one of the liveliest and most helpful agencies for Hispanics in the City.

Centro Hispano has been swept into the Amnesty Program and Hannah Peter and Catherine Joy have been arranging English and Civics classes for those eligible for the legalisation exam. Folk keep coming and coming, so it's very timely indeed for Centro's move into that bigger, brighter, better facility. July is the month set for the entry into the Promised Land!

An exciting year lies ahead for us. In August, we will be welcoming two people into our Community, Doris from Florida and Gretchen who comes from Kansas. With their arrival, Army Street House will be almost full. What then? Perhaps the moment to spread our wings a little more and dare something new?!

Throughout the coming year, we are planning a series of meetings at which we will take a critical look at our life as Franciscan women in community. The culmination of these discussions will take place at our next Chapter to which will be invited a facilitator who can help us pull together our thinking.

On behalf of us all, I send you greetings.

CATHERINE JOY C.S.F.

SOLOMON ISLANDS REGION

Brother Giles writes:—

I am writing this in the middle of June and we are fast approaching the shortest day of the year. It is too dark to read comfortably when Morning Prayer begins at 6.20 a.m. or when Evening Prayer begins at 6.00 p.m. But soon the days will start to be longer and the sun will rise earlier over the Visale mountain to our east and set later into the sea to our west. Today it is pouring with rain. This is rather surprising as we are supposed to be in the dry season, but ours, which should start in the middle of April, hasn't really arrived yet. This is a great blessing as it keeps our water tanks full and our gardens growing. Last year when we arrived here at Hautambu in the middle of May we had virtually no rain until November. That was a help as we were site clearing and starting to build and also were living in temporary accommodation. Today the rain isn't really a nuisance as we have our main brothers' house complete together with the Library and Lecture Room. The carpenters are at present working on the dining hall and kitchen, with the foundations, floor, wall frame and roof completed. They are working indoors preparing the window and door frames. We use what will be a large workshop and tool shed as a temporary dining hall and kitchen at present and that is weatherproof and dry.

Most of the brothers went off to the bush this morning with some local youth to collect a certain kind of vine called Wale-wale. It is like a long cane and very strong. When they have found enough and cut them down from the trees in which they grow they will clean and hammer them and then put them in a local stream to soak for a week. During that time the vine will soften and go a deep purple colour. When this process is completed they will be dried, rolled up and brought here to Hautambu. Then they will be used to weave a coloured pattern into bamboo panels which will become the ceiling of our chapel. We have already cut the bamboo, cleaned, split and laid it out to dry. At the beginning of next month all should be ready for the weaving of the patterned panels by an old man from one of the nearby villages. He will come and live with us while he is doing the work. At the same time one of our aspirants, Gabriel Waga, is staying with us and doing beautiful shell inlay work on the front and sides of our wooden altar. When he has completed that he will make an inlaid cross for the wall behind the altar. We have the concrete foundations and cement floor of the chapel completed and hope to start the walls and roof at the end of this week. Four other brothers are busy making a compound in which to keep pigs. It is about the size of a tennis court and has to have corrugated iron sunk into the ground to stop the pigs digging their way out, and fencing wire on good strong posts to stop them jumping out! Our present pig fence is quite inadequate to prevent its present inhabitant, Clara, from either digging or jumping out.

Our life here at Hautambu is still dominated by the building work, but that should be completed by the end of August. We manage at the same time to have our usual offices, novice lectures, and other activities. As the buildings are finished so the pressures ease and we enjoy the new facilities. After a year of living in a dormitory it is very nice for all of us to have our own room again.

Since the beginning of the year the community has continued to grow and develop. Four postulants came to Hautambu in the middle of January and were admitted on 1 February. On 2 February Levi Malau and Dutton Mabo were made novices. Then on 22 May Brother Randolph, our Minister Provincial, while on a visit from Papua New

Guinea, clothed the postulants as novices. They are Stephen Afflington, Samuel Melaba, William Moffi and James Talo. On 2 June Brother Randolph professed Charles at All Saints Church, Honiara. Charles has changed his name on profession to Adrian. And next week I will be going to Auki to profess Dudley Palmer.

At both Patteson House, Honiara, and S. Francis Friary, Auki, the brothers have continued with their normal life and ministry. Patteson House has been a bit short as three brothers have gone overseas and their replacements from Papua New Guinea have not yet arrived. Athanasius has gone to New Zealand for studies, Andrew Patteson and Jack Austen have gone to Haruro and Popondetta in Papua New Guinea, respectively. We look forward to Elias and Walter coming to us at the end of October. Keith arrived from England at the end of February and after two months at Patteson House has now come to Hautambu. He is being a great help with novice lectures, driving and supervising some of the building work. He is also in demand for retreats and it is good that he has been able to do some. When I go to England for leave in November he will help Manasseh Birahu with the novice training here at Hautambu. Meanwhile Oliver continues with his studies at the School of Nursing, this is his last year as a student and he will be taking his final exams in November. Timothy Joseph is half way through his third year at Kohimarama, the theological centre for the Church of Melanesia. He is due to go to Arawa in Bouganville for five months practical work with our friend David Talanoa. After that he will have his holiday at home and return here in January for his final years of studies. We are hoping that two or three other brothers will be joining him at Kohimarama next year and that we will be able to have a small friary there. Kohimarama is halfway between Hautambu and Honiara so it is very well situated for us. At Auki, Colin continues his work of training young women to be Sunday School teachers. He is living in the village of Fauala and recently the Bishop blessed his house, S. Clare's. Also at Auki, Moses Lonsdale has become part-time secretary for the Auki Region of the Diocese of Malaita.

This year the brothers in all the houses have been able to go on more visits and tours of the church districts. This has been a very rewarding ministry for them and those we have visited. It is also good to meet some of our Companions who are in rather isolated places. The brothers at Hautambu have also done some village evangelism and also entertained at various functions with their pan pipe band. Now we are looking forward to two important events, one is the blessing of Hautambu friary on 4 October by the Archbishop of Melanesia, the other is the General Chapter of the Province which will be taking place in Papua New Guinea in the second half of October. We hope that eleven of our professed brothers will be able to attend that meeting.

He does not want our words. The parched soil . . . opens itself for the rain from heaven and invites it. The parched soul cries out for the living God. Oh! then long and long and long, and God will fill thee. More love, more love, more love!

E. B. PUSEY, in a letter, 22 August, 1882.

The Franciscan, 1959-1988



The Franciscan News

THIRTY years ago Brother David, then Father Minister, wrote in the first issue, Volume I, Number 1, Winter, 1958-9:

It is with real pleasure that I commend to you this first issue of THE FRANCISCAN NEWS. It is a new magazine, and yet (as I hope you will quickly recognise) it is attempting to incorporate what used to be published in the NEWS SHEET and in THE FRANCISCAN.

And this is the reason why the new magazine was called at first THE FRANCISCAN NEWS. But the brothers who formed the Editorial Board never had any intention of leaving it like this for long. The cover was designed from the first to dispense with NEWS in due course. After a while the word was reduced in size, and in 1962 (Vol. IV, No. 3) it quietly disappeared. Of course there were protests, but these came from people who did not know that S.S.F. had had a half-yearly periodical called THE FRANCISCAN, published rather spasmodically for twenty years previously.

First Editor

Brother Peter was the first editor. He held the position for only three years because his work for the Society took him overseas in 1962. After his untimely death on the Feast of the Stigmata of Saint Francis in 1969, his successor wrote (Vol. XII, No. 1, December, 1969):

In the winter of 1958 the Chapter instructed Brother Peter to produce a new publication in place of the old quarterly News Sheet and half-yearly Journal. He set up a small editorial board. He also obtained some professional advice . . . As the editorship was anonymous, it was not generally known that the praise which the first issue received was entirely due to him. The cover-design, arrangement and layout were due to his initiative. He also laid down the policy with regard to contents.

In fact he laid such a good foundation that it has not been found necessary to make a radical alteration for thirty years.

The Taw Cross

The bold T-shaped cross on the cover was inspired by, but not directly copied from, the *Keep-sake* which Saint Francis gave to his disciple, Brother Leo, a precious document housed among the Franciscan treasures in the Basilica of Saint Francis in Assisi. A photograph of it

was used as the frontispiece in the second issue, and an anonymous Companion of our Society explained the history of it (Vol. I, No. 2, Spring, 1959, p. 42-3):

... In 1215 Pope Innocent III summoned ... the Fourth Lateran Council. With the express object of combating heresy, worldliness and general apathy, Innocent preached a brilliant inaugural sermon ... taking as his text the ninth chapter of Ezekiel. He expounded his theme by comparing himself, as the supreme pastor, to 'the man clothed in linen, with a writing case at his side' (Vol. II), whose duty it was to *mark* the forehead of those who were fit to be saved in Jerusalem ... Speaking of the 'TAW' or 'mark' (Vol. IV) Innocent said 'It was of exactly the same form as the cross on which our Lord hung at Calvary. And only those will be marked and will obtain mercy who have mortified the flesh and conformed their lives to that of the Divine Crucified'.

It is interesting to notice that Innocent identified the Hebrew word transliterated TAW (and meaning 'mark') with the form of the cross on Calvary, for modified Aramaic calligraphy had been adopted in about 200 B.C. and gave us the 'square Hebrew' letters used in Hebrew Bibles from that day to this, and familiar to us today ... (But) from Jerome's commentary on Ezekiel it would have been known that there was an archaic Hebrew script in which the letter Taw was cross-shaped ...

Be that as it may, Saint Francis, who heard the sermon at the Fourth Lateran Council ... 'from that moment took to himself the sign † as the symbol of the vocation of the Brethren. It became his sign manual; with it he marked his dwelling-places, and subscribed his letters, as with a saving talisman'.

Our letter T is in fact derived through Greek and Phoenician from the archaic Taw. A footnote explains that 'between the ninth and fifth centuries B.C. there is evidence of the Taw in the form of a crossed T (*i.e.* †) on seals and gems'. Our cover version of the Taw cross has become an S.S.F. symbol, often used in letterheads, made into pendants, and embroidered on a penitential violet stole.

Franciscan Houses

The inside cover and Quarterly Chronicle had only a short list of houses. Cerne Abbas was the address (till changed to Hilfield in 1962 for the benefit of visitors who could never find us) of the Friary and the Home. Though they were really the same place they were listed separately and had separate news until a deliberate rethinking of the

Hilfield identity in 1967. In 1959 the only other houses were Hooke, Cambridge, Stepney, Plaistow and Glasshampton. But from the first we can feel the winds of change. Brother David's Letter in the first issue, quoted above, goes on to speak about 'our hopes for New Guinea'. In the next issue Brother Geoffrey has set sail for New Guinea, in the third he has arrived, and thereafter there is spasmodic news in the Chronicle and the two houses at Koke and Jegarata appear in the list of addresses. Meanwhile Alnmouth has been added to the list in 1961, and in 1962 Brother David speaks of 'the enormous responsibility which has been laid on the Community by the quickly-increasing noviciate'. Surprisingly this did not lead to new houses in England for several years. The effort was directed overseas, with the addition of Brisbane in Australia and Fiwila in Zambia both in the summer of 1965.

By this time, however, the list of addresses had grown in other ways. Another breeze that blew in Vol. I, No. 2 in 1959 was the news that the Community of Saint Francis, still an independent sisterhood, would be leaving Dalston and moving to Ealing. Nothing more is heard, however, until 1962, when it turns out that they are moving to Compton Durville. In the next year (end of 1963) they have joined the list of addresses, and the Chronicle tells us that they are to become part of S.S.F.

A Sister C.S.Cl. appropriately contributed an article on 'The Contemplative Life' in Vol. II, No. 1 (December, 1959), and the frontispiece was the entrance to the convent of the Community of Saint Clare at Freeland. But the address had to wait until December, 1964, before it was included in the list.

THE FRANCISCAN was ten years old before there was a significant change in the list of houses in England in spite of the larger number of brothers. Stepney had been closed in 1963, and the Gatehouse (Toynbee Hall) had been opened as a centre for Brother Owen when he retired from being headmaster at Hooke in 1967. Otherwise the static list of houses gives an impression of lack of initiative, though the Province of the South Pacific had been formed in 1967 and the American Province had been incorporated in 1968, both drawing on what was now called the English Province for support. However in the next two years the opening of Heathfield in Ashton-under-Lyne and 23 Gillott Road in Birmingham signals a new trend of small houses in urban areas, tending more and more to find ways of identification with deprived segments of society.

Thereafter small houses have opened and closed, so that the address list is a constantly changing kaleidoscope of work by brothers and sisters, separately or together, not only in England but also in Scotland and Northern Ireland and for a time in Wales and in Tanzania. Sisters

have joined the work in other provinces, C.S.Cl. in Australia and C.S.F. in America and New Zealand. And THE FRANCISCAN brings news of them all.

Themes

The decision to carry in each issue a group of articles around a theme has meant that most of the main articles are invited contributions, and THE FRANCISCAN has not become a medium for authors seeking publication. No fee is offered to contributors. They have given generously their time and interest, and both editorial board and all our readers are greatly indebted to them. We offer them our very sincere gratitude.

It was decided that the themes should reflect aspects of Franciscan life and the interests with which S.S.F. is mainly identified. The themes of the four issues of Vol. I were Church Unity, Pain and Suffering, the Church and the Industrial Worker, and The Holy Scriptures. Prayer and the religious life and all kinds of caring work have naturally taken the largest share of themes. But there have also been issues on Franciscan History (Vol. IV, No. 3), Art in the Service of the Church (Vol. VII, No. 2), and Poetry and Prose (Vol. VIII, No. 4).

Appreciation of poetry is part of the Franciscan heritage, beginning with Saint Francis' own Canticle of the Creatures and his idea of his friars as God's troubadours. THE FRANCISCAN reprinted short poems as fill-ups from time to time, but it was not until 1966 that an original poem was included, and others have followed from time to time, submitted by various authors (contrary to what was said above about the articles). Poems have become more frequent in the 1980s, but more have had to be rejected than could be accepted. We hope, however, that those selected for the magazine have helped to enlarge the vision of our readers. And with this thought these notes can end with a poem by Thelma Frost, printed in 1985 (Vol. XXVII, No. 1):

The Gates of Vision

On a cold day
 When snow littered the roofs and diamonds the grass,
 Glory shone as through wide-flung gates,
 Warm, serene, welcoming.
 Perhaps it was the wren's bright song
 Unlocked the dark doors and drew us in.
 Never let winter
 Deny the ever-invading warmth of summer.
 Nor the bitter wind
 That heralds the late swallows
 Clang shut the gates of vision.

Franciscan Ideals

Based on a preparatory paper for the General Chapter of the European Province held at Hilfield, 28 August—3 September, 1988,

BY BROTHER BERNARD S.S.F.



BY coincidence the very first issue of THE FRANCISCAN NEWS in the new (now familiar) format, with the Taw cross on the front, reported my clothing as a novice. It was 1958. The profession of Brian and Alban, news of Sister Ursula at Low Fell, the Clares not long (1950)

established at Freeland, Geoffrey soon to leave for New Guinea, teddy boys, borstals, Marlborough boys helping at Hooke, and Max Warren speaking on the Anglican Church in China, all have places in the Father Minister's letter and the four pages of the Chronicle.

There were then six S.S.F. houses, all in England. The May 1988 FRANCISCAN by contrast gives the addresses of just over forty houses in four provinces, European (divided into Northern, Southern and African Regions), American, Pacific Islands and Australia-New Zealand. Is the change only in size and dispersion, or has S.S.F. changed its perspective on its ideals in the last thirty years? We can perhaps find an answer by looking through the data provided by the magazine itself in its themes and articles, and above all in the letters and reports in which the life of the community is chronicled.

Years of Growth

The thirty years from 1959 saw a great growth in the size of our Society and in its dispersion. There is a change from a more centralised, intimate atmosphere to a more complex dispersal of authority, and not quite everyone knowing each other. But perhaps this is hardly a shift of significance in *ideals*. Yes, there is a change to activities outside Great Britain. But again, this interest was shared long before by Douglas and Algy — even if Algy's promises to overseas bishops could not be immediately matched by performance. What requires greater discernment is whether the spirit of adventure and the confident expansionist assumptions which breathe through the Ministers' Letters in successive issues of the magazine represent a shift. Writing in 1968 Michael (then European Provincial) says:

For some years to come we ought to expect that brothers from this Province will continue to pioneer work overseas, and we should

count it a privilege to prepare men for the mission in other countries.

Then in 1971 Geoffrey (Minister General) says that

we must overcome our faithless timidity and fear . . . to enter into the wonderful things God has in store for us in the next fifty years.

The sixties were a time of great confidence (Geoffrey says, "There was a sense of newness and excitement in the air"). It was a time when numbers of both brothers and sisters were increasing, with the result that two or three new houses were opened every year between 1969 and 1975.

Reading back over the reports, one can see that the impetus for the development came from a variety of sources, most notably the decision to start work in New Guinea in the late fifties, the vigorous leadership of David as first Minister General, and the crucial General Chapter of 1966. This chapter responded to the current mood of the church at the time, that 'the world sets the agenda'. Provocative preparatory papers offered new models. The brothers responded by recommending small houses dispersed among ordinary people, living less on our own terms, more 'alongside' than 'helping', and with some brothers going out to work in paid jobs. It was a real attempt to meet the challenge of the times in Britain.

Naturally the expansion put pressure on resources. Geoffrey was pressing ahead with the Pacific Province. The accession of the American Province and the work in Africa required further sharing of brothers. Growth in numbers kept the Society viable, but we placed ourselves under great strain in tackling new enterprises and not relinquishing many of the old.

It is against this background that we can expect to find shifts in perspective of our perceptions of our Franciscan ideals.

Shifts in Perspective on Mission

The missionary expansion of S.S.F. was certainly an important outward change. Some might think there was a loss of nerve which pushed us into trying to be 'relevant'; others that there was in us a kind of impatience which made us try to do everything at once. But really S.S.F. had always been like this from the days when Brother Douglas attempted to open wayfarers' hostels all over the country on the slenderest resources. There would be a real shift of emphasis only if we

withdrew from the rather reckless attempt to adapt the gospel and the Franciscan ideals to changing situations and decided to play safe. New and experimental ways arise from the variety of gifts and personalities that God gives us, but there is something recognisably 'us' in what comes out of the mix.

It is easy to write this off as adolescent enthusiasm. But what we did between 1959 and 1975 we did in an atmosphere of unprecedented change. Michael said in July 1975, 'We are in the middle of a social revolution which is changing society with astonishing and bewildering speed'. And if the story seems breathless, so was (and is) life. Of course not all change in the wider society was good (as Geoffrey's letters in the seventies noted with increasing asperity), and S.S.F. struggled to counteract such trends in the name of Christ. There was a burning desire to convert people to the values of 'the Saint Francis of our time'.

Looking back on THE FRANCISCAN of the last thirty years, I see how many articles there are on mission, evangelism, ministry and the like. It is clear to me that we have come to understand mission more broadly and comprehensively. There have been several S.S.F. conferences on 'Evangelism' (1967) and 'Communicating the Gospel' (1975), etc., and a clear concern (if not some anxiety) to find ways of talking about the gospel as well as trying to live it.

If there has been a shift it is only to highlight elements always in our tradition. Thinking of 'Franciscans for Peace' and 'Justice and Peace Links' (involving us with Roman Catholic communities) and of photographs of Keith with a frowning policeman, I remember the strong witness of Neville and Francis to these things, and of myself carrying a banner with Denis in a march protesting against the Vietnam war. Maybe there will be an increasing emphasis in that direction and a more overt political stance as situations develop. The church has changed and is changing, and S.S.F. with it. But throughout its history S.S.F. has been concerned with the mission of the church and the wider mission of God in the world.

The Shift towards greater Freedom

Did we then lose sight of community in the process? Geoffrey speaks most sharply in a letter in 1975. After quoting a Benedictine who says, 'After thirty years in community, I leave to find community', he talks approvingly of modern, more informal communes and Spirit-filled groups. How different from the large communities with their 'barbed

remarks, jealousy, ambition, pride, cynical and destructive criticism and "holier-than-thou" cliques who think they alone are "Spirit-inspired"! But smaller houses too have their problems. They are less easy to hide in. There is the temptation, often the necessity, to relax some religious community restraints. At the same time there has been the influence of a more permissive society all around us. It is always more difficult to maintain stability in small houses.

A constant problem has been the rapid turnover of those who join and leave after some years. This is not just an S.S.F. problem, but affects all the religious communities. Nevertheless we can be thankful for many who have left us, for they have gone on to do marvellous creative things for the Kingdom. Amos, writing in 1986 when Mtoni Shamba had to be reluctantly handed over to the diocese of Dar-es-Salaam after thirteen years of hard slog, speaks of thirty men who had been clothed as novices over the years, and left: 'They now include a male nurse, a primary school teacher, a professional cook, a priest, a policeman, a catechist, a youth worker, a graduate in business management'. Sometimes it seems as if we gave huge energy to training people to leave us. But whoever thought S.S.F's main task was to build up S.S.F? If there was a shift in perception of community, it was a shift towards greater reality and a determination to live our principles more honestly in the various situations.

This observation serves to show that the shift to greater freedom does not, or ought not, to signal a weakening of the vow of obedience in our fundamental obligations. But far more decisions are taken as a result of consultation than in the 'ask Father/Mother' days. We have worked hard to express this combination of autonomy and *koinonia* even in our Constitution. At a crucial point a model was proposed of an elected Minister General who would appoint Provincials. This was decisively rejected, so that all Ministers are elected, and each Provincial Minister and Chapter is autonomous. The Minister General's named functions (and since 1987 the elected head of each constituent part of the Society has been termed 'Minister General', except the Clares) are few and actual powers fewer than before, for each Province has a freedom which the Ministers General seek to hold together in a common belongingness.

It can also be said that we are less 'solidly churchly' than we were. Many of us were relieved in 1966 when Peter suddenly came out with the proposal of dropping the title 'Father', so that we could witness to our primary commitment to be a community of brothers. Incidentally this

also helped us to grow more easily into a community of brothers and sisters. But our patterns of work show an increasing reluctance to undertake commitments to parish churches and formal church structures. So, while remaining firmly (if not always comfortably) rooted in the church, we see our function more in terms of mission than of maintenance.

For the life of prayer in this period our Rule was changed only by substituting a fourfold pattern for the sevenfold Daily Office. In the smaller houses the Office has become less 'monastic' and the Eucharist less formal. Commitment to silent prayer under the Rule seems to have deepened in this period, and has been reinforced by the hermits (or temporary hermits) among us — Harold, Gabriel, Ramon — and by the Clares.

Feminine Perspectives

The evidence reviewed above suggests that, in a period of expansion and enormous outward change, the ideals of S.S.F. have not been fundamentally altered. As Canon Eric James put it beautifully in an article in 1967, 'The flame of Francis danced but remained steady'. In one respect, however, the outward change reflects a real shift in the Society's perspective. In 1959 S.S.F. is clearly a community of celibate men with its Third Order and Companions. At this time the 'Dalston Sisters' (C.S.F.) are just mentioned. After the move to Compton Durville, however, the sisters grew more and more involved with the brothers, and themselves changed dramatically. In 1964 C.S.F. became a part of S.S.F., and in 1973 traditional Franciscan categories were changed for them to become 'First Order Sisters'.

Returning from overseas in 1975, a brother comments on the 'totally natural way' brothers and sisters are together, and notes that several of the houses are mixed, not just for practical reasons but from conviction. Constitutionally there has been a great attempt to establish justice and parity. We still have far to go, as male superiority tends to lie hidden in the motivation even of those who are trying to adapt. But many in the Society believe that such change is the way to Christ's truth about human sexuality, as it should be expressed more fully in the church and in the world. Religious communities have often strengthened and reinforced patterns of segregation and dominance, even hanging on to attitudes which society itself is disowning. The hope is that they can now

be a sign of better things, which reflect more accurately God's world of sexual mutuality.

Conclusion

The shift from male perspectives to the beginnings of awareness of feminine perspectives is the largest single change in our ideals. The general impression given by Volumes I to XXX of THE FRANCISCAN is of a remarkable consistency both in our interests and in our behaviour, showing us to be committed to the church, concerned for the world, especially the more needy, and bound together by Franciscan spirituality, prayers and theology, while we work in many countries, often not our own. These ideals are enshrined in our Principles. They were expressed again for the 800th anniversary of Francis' death, and are quoted by Geoffrey in January 1982 (Vol. XXIV, No. 1):

1. To celebrate the dignity of human life by emphasising Christian love in the Franciscan family; respect for life, at all stages of life; developing attitudes towards people which avoid any form of discrimination; and by exploring the arts, sciences, culture and scholarship for uplifting the human spirit.
2. To lead the people to rejoice in the gift of creation through justice in the Franciscan family; just distribution and use of the goods of creation among peoples and nations; through conservation and ecology; through concern about affluence, consumerism and inequitable economic systems.
3. To proclaim the good news of Christ by Gospel life within the Franciscan family; by reaching the unchurched; by expanding our ecumenical visions; by being instruments of peace and reconciliation; and by broadening the use of communication for evangelism.

The Society of Saint Francis in its tiny way has expressed some of all this over the years through its various Orders and very diverse personalities. It is with such ideals that we go forward as we seek to fulfil God's role for us in the future.

Happiness does not consist in knowing something about God but in having him within us.

S. GREGORY OF NYSSA.

Justice and Peace

North American Franciscans Answer the Call to Justice and Peace.

BY STEPHEN CIANCA



AS chief writer for *Mustard Seed*, a Franciscan peace and justice newsletter, I have for the past four years heard the stories of all sorts of Franciscans who have dedicated themselves to bringing about the Kingdom of God. For these Franciscans, peace and justice are an integral part of their Franciscan vocation.

'Peace and Justice' is an easy phrase to utter, but it covers a lot of territory. It most certainly does not refer to some monolithic movement, highly organized and well-defined. 'Peace and Justice' is not a cause, but a commitment with as many faces as there are individual Franciscans living out this commitment.

The commitment is to a set of values—human dignity, the sanctity of creation, non-violence, simplicity, solidarity with the poor and oppressed; values which are all part of the legacy of S. Francis. For many Franciscans today in North America, and throughout the world, it is not enough simply to say 'I am a follower of Francis'. Rather, it is felt that these words must be backed up by a commitment to action and to a style of living which validates these words.

For Capuchin friar Richard Cardarelli, the commitment to imitating the Poverello involves witnessing against the arms race. Richard, the peace and justice director for the Capuchin Province of S. Mary (New York), was acquitted in December, 1986 by a jury trial in New London, CN, of charges of criminal trespass and disorderly conduct. The charges were incurred when Richard prayed the rosary at the commissioning of the Trident submarine *USS Nevada* in Groton, Connecticut on 16 August, 1986. It took the jury five minutes to return their verdict.

'I was really expecting to go to jail', Richard explains. 'The judge had told the jury to focus on my "crime" and disregard my religious beliefs, which were "irrelevant". In his eyes, the point was that I shouldn't have infringed on the rights of people wanting to celebrate the launching of the submarine'.

It was precisely this celebrating that disturbed Richard. 'My intention was not to break the law, but to pray for peace. I wanted people to realize

that what they were celebrating was something evil, an instrument of death. My action was a statement for life, a reminder to people of international law and God's law'.

Richard takes what he calls a Franciscan approach to civil disobedience and to witnessing in general. 'I don't take a confrontative approach when I demonstrate', he explains. 'I aim to be respectful and friendly; to reach out in dialogue, not condemn. I don't think of the people on the other side as "the enemy" '.

The Capuchin friar admits that it is not easy to control one's anger and remain non-violent in the face of violence from others. 'From my experience of arrest and trial and the possibility of jail, I learn of my own feelings of violence. I constantly need to take myself back to Francis and his example of love for "enemies" '.

'From your first exposure to Francis, you see him as a man of peace. Peacemaking is not an optional commitment. It is a requirement of our faith. This is not some ideological program, but the teaching of our Church'.

* * *

Franciscan sister Loretta Klinkhammer lives out her commitment to peace and justice in a more personal way. For her, peace and justice takes the form of solidarity with dispossessed farmers.

Loretta is a member of the 'Sisters of S. Francis of Rochester, Minnesota. She joined the sisters in 1929, working most of the time since then as a nurse. In 1982, she came to Sacred Heart parish in Waseca, a town in rural Minnesota. For the past two years, Loretta has served as the animator for HOPE (Help Our People Endure), a support group for struggling farm families.

'There is a terrible emotional trauma when the sheriff comes to serve notice that your farm has been foreclosed', she says. 'It's more than just losing a job, it's losing your home, your whole way of life'.

HOPE sprang from a desire to give rural people a place where they could talk about the problems of losing their livelihood. HOPE is an ecumenical effort, reflecting the close co-operation between the Lutheran and Catholic Churches in Minnesota in dealing with the farm crisis.

The support group meets every week. People are free to belong for as long as they feel a need. Usually there are about twelve people at a given meeting. 'People share where they are', Loretta says, 'their pain, their troubles. Prayer is a very important part of our group. We also believe strongly in solidarity with each other. When someone's farm is being foreclosed, we make sure we are there as a presence of support'.

'Farm families are under tremendous stress, even when foreclosure is not an immediate concern. I know a family where the father had to go into trucking to make ends meet. He is gone most of the week, leaving his wife to raise two teenagers. Yesterday I called her to see if we could get together, since I hadn't seen her in a while. She just burst into tears'.

For Loretta, the farm crisis also involves her Franciscan respect for creation. She, and many others, are concerned for the environment, as agribusiness replaces agriculture, becoming more chemical-intensive and less connected to the community.

'I think reverence for the land and the value of stewardship are very important', says Loretta. 'Often we have renters using the land who know nothing about soil conservation. I've seen in a new way the care for the land and animals that farmers have'.

'The farm crisis is ultimately a moral issue, not an economic one. When farmers are paid for their produce less than what it costs to grow it, that's injustice. HOPE is not going to solve the problem of this injustice. But we are convinced that caring persons can save people, even though the farms may still be lost'.

* * *

This Franciscan concern for suffering people, people who have fallen through society's safety net, underscores another Franciscan peace and justice effort — ministry to people with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

It is a ministry which for many followers of Francis is quintessentially Franciscan. Persons with AIDS (PWA's) have become social outcasts, deserted and despised by the healthy majority, much like the lepers of Francis' time.

Franciscans in AIDS ministry met for the first time in Tampa, Florida in January of 1987 to share experience and to solidify the growing Franciscan ministry to people affected by AIDS.

The Tampa conference represented every branch of the Franciscan family, in both the Anglican and Roman Catholic traditions. Conventuals, Capuchins, Friars Minor, sisters and brothers of the Third Order Regular, Secular Franciscans and those who felt attracted to the vision of Francis attended.

Most of the participants were already involved in some type of AIDS ministry. Others were seriously interested in reflecting on the many issues that the AIDS crisis raises for our ministry as Franciscans.

The idea for the gathering originated with Marie Puleo O.S.F. and Jay Pinkerton O.F.M. Both, having been involved for some time in ministry with people affected by AIDS, sensed a need for ministerial support and reflection in this area. This insight led to the formation of the Lazzaro Center, a resource and support center located in New York City for those in AIDS ministry.

(The Lazzaro Center takes its name from San Lazzaro d'Arce, a little hospital on the plains of Assisi where Francis first began his ministry to the sick and outcast, after his embrace of the leper.)

Bob Pawell O.F.M. delivered the conference's keynote address. Bob ministers to prostitutes and the gay and lesbian communities in the French Quarter of New Orleans. Bob's individual ministry has grown into a community of three friars and three hundred associates now known as Tau House. It was out of this context that Project Lazarus in New Orleans — a residence for men with AIDS — and Bob's own AIDS ministry began.

For Bob, the key concept is ministry 'among' rather than ministry 'to'. 'The one who is sent *to* goes with an agenda, a plan, with proposals and actions already prepared. You go *to* with a sense of purpose. You go *among* with a great sense of openness and discovery'.

'It is this listening stance that should characterize the Franciscan response to the AIDS crisis', says Bob. 'We are called to walk with those affected by this disease, with their families and friends. In this way we can respond more honestly to their needs as they reveal them to us'.

The Lazzaro Center conference in Tampa marked an important point in the story of the Franciscan response to the AIDS crisis. In many ways it was a beginning; several more such conferences have been held since then in various parts of the United States. At the same time the

conference was a confirmation of the continuing validity of the Poverello's message and challenge to the world.

* * *

A final example of Franciscan concern for peace and justice represents the concerted efforts of the entire Friar Minor community in North America. It demonstrates the Franciscan concern for the poor and oppressed beyond the borders of the U.S. and Canada. It is also an attempt to develop the Franciscan charism of fraternity across cultural divides.

In an effort to strengthen collaboration with the friars of Latin America, the Provincials of the O.F.M. Conference of North America approved a proposal to establish an interprovincial house in Central America. This house is to be the site of a project to provide North American friars with a reflective experience of the Third World.

The Central America Pilgrimage, as the project is called, is the fruit of three years of preparation by the O.F.M. Justice and Peace Council.

'The Conference recognized that this was a program with all the right ingredients', says David Eckelkamp O.F.M., Executive Secretary of the O.F.M. Conference. 'It provides an opportunity for personal conversion, first-hand experience of the Central American situation, and it invites a personal response, which is what our "Call to Evangelization" document calls for. It also parallels an already successful program — the Assisi Pilgrimage'.

'It is our hope', explains John Quigley O.F.M., Chairman of the O.F.M. Justice and Peace Council and one of the project's initiators, 'that participants will gain an experiential perspective of the First World from the viewpoint of a citizen of the Third World. We hope that participants will reflect on their experiences using the Gospel and Franciscan writings'.

'The internationalization of the Friars Minor is an active process right now', explains David Eckelkamp. 'As North American Franciscans, we want to collaborate and connect more with our Latin American confreres. The Central America Pilgrimage can be a foundation stone in this effort'.

As the project is currently designed, two or three friars from the English-speaking Conference would go to El Salvador to set up the host community. They would not be missionaries; rather, their primary responsibility would be working with the participants as facilitators of the Pilgrimage program. As such, they and the participants would be guests of the Central American Vicariate. They would not constitute a separate foundation.

Participation in the project would be open to all O.F.M. friars, and eventually to all Franciscans (as is the case with the Assisi program). Participants could choose among three options: a six-week pilgrimage, a two or three-month stay, or a sabbatical year.

The proposed site of the Pilgrimage is El Salvador. The Justice and Peace Council recommended this country based on the experience of several members who visited Central America on a fact-finding tour in January of 1986.

The country's small size and close proximity were cited as advantages, as well as a religious and political climate 'alive for reflection'. Another advantage is the established presence of O.F.M. friars from four provinces (Spain, Ireland, Italy and New York).

El Salvador would also provide participants with opportunities to make contact with a wide variety of groups: Mothers of the Disappeared, human rights groups, the Archdiocese, the U.S. Embassy, refugee camps, the University of Central America, base Christian communities, and the friars already living and working there.

Finally, being immersed in a non-English speaking culture, such as El Salvador, will offer North American friars a challenge to their own cultural and linguistic biases. It is hoped that the experience of being a 'stranger in a strange land' will open up a deeper understanding of minority.

It is hoped that a pilot program can begin in the fall of this year. This group would, based on their experiences, design the program and smooth out whatever wrinkles there were. The friars are working to formally open the program some time in 1989.

These stories of Franciscan commitment to live the Gospel in a radical, concrete way represent only a small sample. There are hundreds more Franciscans in North America doing similar, and other, ministries. All are animated by a deep desire to be faithful to the examples of Jesus and Francis.

Peace and justice wears many faces. It is feeding the poor; it is caring for refugees from violence in Central America. It is witnessing against nuclear weapons; it is combatting racism. Those involved are teachers, doctors, social workers, biologists, priests, farmers, lawyers, factory workers. But they all have one thing in common — they are all followers of Francis trying to make his way of life a prophetic witness for the twentieth century.

Stephen Cianca is Managing Editor of Mustard Seed, a monthly publication which highlights what Franciscans of all parts of the family are doing for justice and peace. It is published in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Franciscan Response

Our Response to the Gospel Call following Francis of Assisi

BY SISTER MAUREEN DARCY F.M.M.



IN 1980, at S. Francis Centre in Cincinnati, Ohio, a ministerial programme in spiritual direction was born, out of a conviction that, as Franciscans, we have something unique to offer others. Father Tom Speier O.F.M. became Director. Twice yearly a twelve week

'live in' course for Franciscan men and women takes place in Cincinnati. The programme has now been brought to countries further afield by Father Tom and other members of his team. In September 1986 such a programme took place in Mill Hill, London, for eight participants — four priests and four sisters from various Franciscan communities in the country. I was privileged to be one of them. Our Directors were Tom Speier O.F.M. and Sister Marilyn Joyce O.S.F. The programme was based on S. Bonaventure's Major Life of Francis. It was an intensive, experiential programme with time for prayer, input, reflection, sharing and recreating. The eight of us had come from very different backgrounds, and yet when asked on the first day what our expectations

were, we were almost unanimous in wanting among other things to make our own the Franciscan spirit, to get in touch with Francis as a fellow pilgrim, to experience and explore Franciscan influences in our prayer life and to learn to give directed retreats with a Franciscan flavour. At the end of our three months we agreed that our expectations had been realized a hundredfold.

Since December 1986 we have worked as a team, sometimes in twos, other times alone, to share some of the riches we received. This usually takes the form of weekend sessions or sharings in communities. During the year, for different groups, we have eight-day directed retreats. The weekends comprise four elements, namely input from the members of the team, private reflection, group sharing, and prayer.

We try, during our sessions on Franciscan spirituality, not just to make them academic or informative, but to help the participants identify and name religious experiences in Francis, in themselves and in others, in order to foster personal integration and spiritual growth. We endeavour to get a 'feel' for the experiences that shaped the direction of Francis' life, as he was in the process of being formed. This then helps us to identify similar moments in our own lives and the lives of others whom we direct.

During the sessions on the Prayer of Francis, we have a short presentation on the background, language and key elements of a specific prayer. Following the presentation, time is given for personal reflection using the prayer itself. The group then comes together for a sharing of their own feelings and insights, gleaned from their time alone with these words of Francis.

We look on the Directed Retreat as a time when participants walk with the Lord and listen to His plans for them. It is a time to get further in touch with the movements of the Spirit within themselves so as to respond better to the call of the Lord in the days and weeks ahead. This will also make them more attuned to similar calls that Francis experienced in his own life. It is also an opportunity to get in touch with their own personal journeys and religious experiences before joining in sharing with members of their community or other groups. Franciscan spirituality is shared spirituality, when brothers and sisters share together the Lord's unique working in their lives.

Francis is our model of the Christian's response to the Gospel call, even though Francis' life represents only one way of responding to that call —

the Franciscan way. It is this way that Bonaventure presents in his *Major Life of Francis*.

We, too, can identify with Francis' experiences in his journey of living out the Gospel call. We are not simply to imitate S. Francis. We could not do so. We are not just to do what he did — there is only one S. Francis. Rather, we learn from Francis, not the what, but the way, to act on the Gospel in our century. Even though our journeys might follow different roads, Francis and we are both guided by the way of Jesus, His Gospel. Jesus is the WAY to the Father. Francis is not a lane beside or a way within the Way, but he is our fellow traveller. On the way God has given me a guide in the person of Francis.

Francis has his peculiarities and idiosyncrasies. They are all part of the man, what makes him unique and lovable. For me, Francis, with all his lights and shadows, is the point where Franciscan living finds its meaning.

The journey through life for followers of Francis is an incarnational journey. It is a continuous seeking and finding the Lord within the context of human experiences — experiences that reveal our weaknesses and brokenness as well as our gifts and strengths. It is a moving in faith towards ever more integration into the life of the Lord.

Francis had to travel the same road of faith as we do. What was it like for him? What did he experience on the journey? How did he hear the Lord? What was his response?

When a group of friends meet, they like to tell stories. The idea is to relive the past and touch the ground of their fellowship again. The Christian fellowship is based on a collection of stories, poems and sayings, called the Bible. When Christians come together they retell these stories. The Eucharist contains the retelling of these stories.

Franciscan spirituality is story spirituality. The stories that bind us together as Franciscans are the stories concerning Francis and the early Friars. It was in these stories that God revealed to Francis a new way of being a Christian. Francis and his companions had to grope and search to find God's will the hard way. They had to struggle with it in the situations of their time in order to master it. The process is still going on. If we want to translate this vision for our times and situations, we have to enter their story and wrestle with that same vision in our own dark night and mingle our story with theirs and our dream with theirs. Thus

our story, combined with that of Francis and the early Friars, can ultimately be combined with the story of Jesus.

Francis visualized that the men and women who would follow him for all ages would come together in small groups, and sit down and listen to his words. The Rule was for him the crystallisation of his story, not a piece of legislation. 'I beg them all to love, observe and treasure this Rule'. What Francis wanted was not obedient servants but brothers and sisters who were sharers in his vision.

Having had time and space during the three months course to read and reflect on the Franciscan resources, it is amazing now how at different moments of my life certain stories, phrases, words come before me. When I see violence on our TV screens I think of the story of the Wolf of Gubbio. I am reminded of how fear builds up walls between people and nations. It is a reminder that we can all be wolves to each other and what makes us so most of the time is fear. Fear builds up stock-piles of nuclear weapons in many senses. Francis of Assisi shows us the way of trust. He went alone to speak with the wolf. He was doing the same thing in different ways all the time; when he embraced the leper, when he begged in the streets, when he went out to meet the Sultan. By trusting and making himself vulnerable he tamed the wolf. And he taught us to see the enemy as a neighbour, a brother, a sister. Francis is very insistent that we should be messengers of peace. 'The Lord revealed to me', he wrote, 'that we greet people with these words: May the Lord give you peace'. For Francis example was more important than words. To live a life of witness to Christ was what counted. He learnt from others through listening and dialogue. He was influenced by the reverence of the Muslims for God, their respect for the Koran and their call to prayer. In his letters we read how he introduced the prostrations, telling the Friars to fall to the ground and adore the Lord. He prescribed reverence for the sacred Scriptures and introduced the ringing of a bell hourly to remind the people to adore the Lord.

The world is a place of conflict, but Francis sets out to establish a world of peace. The world is a place where men fight one another and tear one another to pieces, but for Francis the 'other' is first and foremost a brother, wherever he happens to be.

Francis was living in a world where the Church was often criticised and sometimes rejected for being unfaithful to the Gospel. Francis knew that this charge was sometimes true. However, he made his stand there

within the Church with deep fidelity, because he knew that the Church was the place to hear the Word of God, the place where the Body and Blood of Christ are given to us.

Francis, though he threw in his lot with the poor, refused to condemn anyone. He would tell his brothers 'do not judge, do not condemn the rich', which does not mean he approved of their injustices, but simply that, for Francis, every man was first and foremost a brother, a friend, since all were brothers and sisters to the Lord.

When Francis describes the 'Perfect Friar', we note that his portrait of each friar is the outcome of a long look at him, of a contemplation from a particular angle — the angle of love. It is only love that reveals that particular characteristic that makes a person unique. What Francis means by this story is that no one can be a good 'Friar Minor' in isolation. To answer the question What is a perfect Friar Minor?, Francis turns to the community.

The charism of Francis is a living, growing reality. It is not something that can be found in books, though books are helpful. I find it in the community of sisters to which I have been called and in the community of my sisters and brothers of the larger Franciscan family.

Francis says to each one of us:—

'I have done my part,
May Christ teach you yours'. 2 Cel. 214.

As I reflect on what Francis did for God, for the Church, for his fellow human beings and for our physical world, I pray that I may be open to the Spirit to do my part for the Lord, His Church, my brothers and sisters, and for our beautiful world.

'In every work of art he (Francis) praised the Artist. Whatever he found in creation he referred to the Creator . . . He made for himself, from all things, a ladder, by which to come close to God's throne'. 2 Cel. 165.

A doctrine is always in danger of being over-defined and so leads to an exclusive attitude. An 'insight' indicates a direction in which a relationship can be explored. To me this is the heart of the matter.

MAX WARREN.

S.S.F. over the Years

BY JOHN TOWNROE



THE Editors have invited me to contribute to this issue some personal impressions of the Society of S. Francis over the years. I have known about the Society since 1932, and have met its members and visited its houses in widely different circumstances for the past fifty years. I will try, then, to recall some fragments of memory, and to reflect a little on them.

In 1932, as a boy of twelve, I found a copy of *The Floweret* (as this magazine used to be called) in my grandmother's house in Essex. Why she had it, I am not sure. On reading it, I learnt about a Franciscan brotherhood on a farm in Dorset, and was struck immediately by its practical concern for the unemployed. These were the days of the Great Depression, of the economic crisis when Britain went off the gold standard, of appalling living conditions for those out of work, and of the Jarrow Marches. I could see what I have noticed in S.S.F. many times since, that the Brothers did not merely express concern, but did something about it. *The Floweret* showed me that Brother Douglas and others were tackling the situation in three ways: (1) by providing Homes of S. Francis as refuges for the thousands of men who were tramping the roads of Britain in search of work ('a hostel in every town' — 'a home in every county'); (2) by personally sharing the life of wayfarers on the roads, sleeping in hedgerows and workhouses; (3) by striving to change the law and society's provisions for vagrants. The Vagrancy Reform Society in which Douglas played a part, lobbied successive governments to such good effect that eventually reforms of the law were put in hand, and improvements were made to workhouses everywhere.

'Christianity versus Churchianity'

My next recollection is of hearing in the 1930s of the Brothers being joined by a group of volunteer schoolboys in digging an open-air swimming pool at Hilfield, for the use of anyone staying in the Friary. Not a major event, perhaps, in the history of S.S.F., but it stuck in my mind and somehow it became for me a symbol of what I had already glimpsed — that these Brothers, in seeking to lead the Gospel-life, had about them a quality of open-airness, unstuffiness and unconventional-

ity. This was particularly good news for me at the time, because I was feeling oppressed by the stuffiness (as it seemed to me) of the conventional, Established Church in the 1930s. 'Christianity versus Churchianity' was the slogan that then summed up the conflict for me — a conflict which has not ceased, nor ever will, I suppose, in this life. It was like a breath of fresh air to hear of these Brothers pioneering their style of Christian discipleship, in the Church and yet somehow not of it. They looked open, open-hearted and open to new possibilities.

I remember another example of how S.S.F. went straight to the point of human need in the simplest manner. It must have been one day in 1941, when I went to visit Douglas in his tiny room with a glass roof alongside the chapel at the top of the former Westminster Hospital opposite the Abbey, where the new Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre now stands. The YMCA had taken over the building in war-time, and was using it as a transit hostel for Allied troops passing through London. Douglas was living there as chaplain to the hostel, a strange sight in his brown habit amongst so many service uniforms, and having amazing success in making personal contacts in a very short time. He took me on to the roof and there I saw another imaginative Franciscan stroke: he was growing tomatoes in soil begged from the head gardener in S. James Park, in a greenhouse begged from the owners of a blitzed house in Chelsea; and keeping hens up there in order to provide extra rations for the service men, though bombs from Luftwaffe aircraft were falling all around.

Another snapshot from memory: Father Charles ('Father' was always used of the priest-brothers in those days) coming into the kitchen very late one Saturday night in the vicarage of S. Chrysostom's Church, Peckham, in South London, when in war-time the Brothers were looking after the parish. He had come hotfoot from some parish activity, and sat down immediately at the kitchen-table and began to write notes on scraps of paper for his sermon next morning. Nothing very unusual in that, perhaps, and not the text-book way to prepare a sermon, but it had about it an air of freedom and a sense of simply doing the next thing, and doing it with a humorous humility. Like many other similar incidents in S.S.F., this one looked haphazard, even amateur, but I came to appreciate how much training and discipline lay behind it. Brothers like Charles and Douglas and many others since, did not come by their inner freedom easily, but often at great cost to themselves. They have been able, consequently, to help others to discover for themselves what

personal freedom in Christ means. I think here specially of some Tertiaries who have found in membership of the Third Order a new entrance into the way of grace, freedom, discipline and love.

Love and Discipline

Another aspect of the Franciscan way of love and discipline is captured for me by the memory of being allowed one day to attend a lecture on the history of the Religious Life in the Western Church, given at Hilfield Friary by Father Algy. He was instructing the novices, and in his inimitable manner — very persuasive — was emphasising the importance of regularity in life and worship, the value of stability, and the relevance of the monastic tradition to the Franciscan story. Fascinating. He made it clear to me that there was going to be a tension in S.S.F. — probably there already was — between the vital elements of unconventionality with a free-and-easiness on the one hand, and the essential elements of discipline and rule on the other.

This aspect of the spirituality of S.S.F. — its drawing upon ancient sources to inform its life and teaching — came home to me again as a student at Lincoln Theological College when Denis came to conduct a retreat. It was a retreat in traditional style, commending the use of silence, meditation, contemplation and sacramental confession. It was laced with plenty of good stories, illustrating the addresses, and there was no mistaking where the power in the retreat lay. It came through the preaching of the Word, urgent preaching, the preaching of the Cross and Resurrection. My guess is that the most powerful preaching done by the Brothers (and more recently by the Sisters) has been not only in the course of missions, but in retreat-conducting.

Unity in Diversity

It must have been at about this time that I noticed something else. S.S.F. has shown its ability over the years to attract and hold together diverse strands in the Church of England — let us call them in short-hand the catholic, the evangelical, the liberal, the charismatic and the radical. For one thing, there is a magic about the brown habit which I don't pretend to understand: I have simply observed again and again that it does more than merely attract attention or arouse curiosity. It seems to be a sign or signal, at least to a remarkable number of people, that here is not 'vested-interest Christianity', but an authentic attempt at the Christ-life. The signal reaches widely diverse kinds of people.

It is also true that S.S.F. has held together in one society over the years Brothers and Sisters of very different viewpoints, some passionately catholic, some fervently evangelical, some fiercely radical, some burstingly charismatic, and some decidedly 'laid-back' liberal! S.S.F. has had to struggle to integrate diversity into the unity of its common life, and the struggle goes on. Its good measure of success has made, I believe, a wonderful contribution to the Church of England which is always weak when these diverse elements are at war with each other, always spiritually strong when they are well co-ordinated within its life.

In the North

After the war, when I was working with the Company of Mission Priests in Sunderland, Co. Durham, Brothers used to come and stay with us in our council house on Ford Estate, a slum clearance Corporation housing estate, and joined in the life of the parish. Algy, Michael and Reginald were among those who came, and I recall how quickly they won the affection of the people — coalminers, shipyard workers and their families. Algy came to speak one day to a meeting of the clergy Chapter, carrying an old knapsack from which he pulled out a battered Bible and a bundle of letters. He used the time during the local business part of the meeting, before his turn came to speak, to write replies to the letters, his pen moving across the page very rapidly. Again it was a small incident, but it speaks to me of another S.S.F. ministry which I have had reason to be grateful for — the ministry of counselling by letter-writing.

The famous annual Wooler Camp in Northumberland, partly inspired and run by S.S.F., was a great influence for many years on parishes in the north of England. It drew together young people from industry and colleges to share for a while an open-air life together, sleeping in tents, with shared prayer, talks, open-air Eucharists, walking expeditions, camp fires, and so on. I remember how eagerly from Ford Estate our party would pile into the backs of open lorries, wedged in amongst our equipment, for the long journey to Wooler, and how the result of the experience in camp was always found to be something marvellously good for all concerned, beyond what could be achieved in the usual routine of the parish.

Turmoils and Achievements

Recent years have seen S.S.F. grow and mature. It is, I think, worth noticing that the achievements have been made during a period of turmoil for Europe after the colossal upheavals of two world wars.

Growth and maturity have taken place in a context of conflict. The churches and S.S.F. felt the force of national and social disturbances, and had their own struggles, institutionally, intellectually and spiritually. Two books, outstandingly, reflected the conflicts and set some of the agenda, and still do. In 1953 the first English edition was published of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Letters and Papers from Prison*; and in 1963 John Robinson's *Honest to God* appeared. The repercussions of both books were felt immediately throughout the Church in England. S.S.F. responded as did the Church in general with a mixture of reactions. It has been said that Bonhoeffer's tentative ideas 'were developed by a number of other Christians who greeted the secularisation of the post-war period as preferable to centuries of superstition and oppression. They were convinced that the beliefs and organisation of the church would have to be changed radically' (D. Edwards, *The Futures of Christianity*, p. 294). Not all in S.S.F. would have agreed with this at the time, but the quotation shows how sharp the conflicts could be. No Religious Community could be immune from them.

At the same time, from 1963 onwards, the Second Vatican Council was meeting in Rome, and in its own way was being no less radical. It was overturning much among Roman Catholics which had seemed to be immutable. It left a vast amount of unfinished business to be pursued in the 1970s and 1980s, and the task of reform and updating is still far from complete. The Religious Life, the meaning and purpose of the Vows, the tension between action and contemplation — all were up for review. But positive changes were beginning to emerge, aided by the example of communities like Taizé, and I have seen these influences having an effect within S.S.F.

Working in colleges during these years to the present day, I have felt the violence of the theological storms which have struck the churches, and which have caused some shipwrecks. I have seen how they have rocked the confidence of some ordinands (and some novices in S.S.F.) in basic Christian practices such as worship and prayer, not only in England, but among Roman Catholic seminarians in America. S.S.F. has been throughout a spiritual resource for many ordinands and priests, as it has been for lay men and women similarly affected. I think especially of the visits to lecture and conduct retreats for the men of King's College London in Warminster, by several of the Brothers, to whom I want to acknowledge a debt, including Charles, Michael, Denis, Edward, Reginald, Silyn, Peter, Aelred, Barnabas and Bernard.

Seven Cheers for S.S.F.

In conclusion, at this moment when we celebrate the success of S.S.F. in producing THE FRANCISCAN for thirty years, I should like to call for seven, not three, cheers for the Society, because at its best it has been distinguished by seven marks:

1. A direct personal response to situations — often situations which require courage, discernment and the refusal to be deterred by knowing that what can be done is only a drop in the ocean.
2. A personal embodiment of a Christ-likeness, witnessing unselfconsciously to the incarnation and presence of God in this world.
3. A speaking and a preaching of the Word with a directness and simplicity which, while not naive, is certainly not sophisticated and which springs from personal union with Christ.
4. A special kind of personal befriending which differs both from just being friendly and from professional counselling. It is being with someone else in Christ, or being in Christ with someone else, and there is a particular S.S.F. flavour to the way it's done.
5. A community embodiment of Christ-likeness which I have known in several S.S.F. houses. In more recent years I have also seen some of the cost at which it is bought. Those on the inside are aware of the strains, struggles and contradictions: those on the outside, of peace and the presence of God.
6. A breath of fresh air coming from life in the Spirit and the open-air aspects of S.S.F.
7. A holding together in love of opposites. The Church of England, despite its failings, *does* achieve this by the grace of God to a remarkable degree, and S.S.F. has made a great contribution to it. Further, S.S.F. in its attitudes and its presentation of the Gospel offers an unthreatening appearance (and reality) to Christians of other traditions. This is real ecumenism. It is lived ecumenism. It has wide application to inter-faith dialogue, and to the creation of a better world.

Canon John Townroe was formerly Warden of S. Boniface College, Warminster.

Brother John S.S.F.

JOHN NORMANSHAW, Derbyshire man, stoker of locomotive and other boilers, arrived at the Friary, Cerne Abbas in Francistide, 1945, to test his vocation with the Society of Saint Francis. On Monday, 20 June, 1988 he died peacefully in hospital in Kidderminster, aged 81 years, and thus completed the offering begun two months after the end of World War II.

We bless God for his love and his laughter, for his gift for friendship as a messenger of the Lord, for the many, many vegetables which grew up in his care and sometimes got him down in the process, for the salty wisdom and common sense which he would share with us as he leant on his spade in the garden between the rows of digging. We were sometimes a bit nervous of his critical tongue, for he could be unkind — though nearly always his target would have been guilty of pretence or pretentiousness in some form, and he was always quick to spot that.

He lived and served successively at Hilfield, Cable Street (Stepney), Alnmouth, Llandudno and (from 1976) Glasshampton — served his brothers (he described himself as gardener and lavatory cleaner), and the many people he met on missions (often with the late Brother Silyn) or among neighbours. No better place for conversation with local people than the Alnmouth vegetable patch, and it was lovely to see at his requiem at Hilfield some of our neighbours from Chetnole whom he had visited in the '50s.

May he rest in peace, and rise in glory.

An Evergreen in Highgate Woods

With storm-striped humus crust
(the loosening gale a cat
 swingeing by nine tails)
now comatose below an eyelid of ice
the nesh leaves consume,
cast at a burning
Autumn hawks of crabby news.

But the holly, shrouded in spiny wimple
of deepening green,
sobs nightly beneath a stripped oak altar
foreboding for a wight
conceived

 to mess with her menacing tongues:
one nimbus of Godhead she can form,
amulet of our singular relenting.

PETER SINCLARE

Books

For Younger Readers

Two Fantastic Tales. By Brother Alban S.S.F. Oxford: Community of S. Clare, 75p.
Obtainable from S. Mary's Convent, Freeland, Oxford OX7 2AJ.

Brother Alban's two former books for children, *Two Odd Tales* and *Two Spooky Tales* not only grab the imagination of children, but of adults too! This new *Two Fantastic Tales* is no exception, and because of the nature of the two stories they need, and have, excellent line-drawing illustrations by one of the Freeland sisters.

I had no sooner read the two stories with much enjoyment, when the copy was taken away from Glasshampton by a visiting ten-year-old called Matthew. As soon as he had read it, he asked for the former books, and has told me he is engaged in writing a thank-you letter to Alban.

The first fantastic story is *Cat in a Bottle*, telling the tale of Jeremy and his relationship with a demon-cat called Mephistopheles and an angel-cat called Firozel and their adventures in and out of the magic bottle. After some scary experiences, light overcomes darkness, and Jeremy, having learned in his small way

of the cosmic conflict, returns to normality — but wiser!

The second fantastic story, called *Goodness Nose* (got it?) — concerns Marleen 'Nosey' Miller from Primrose Lane Middle School — and you can imagine what kind of a girl she is. The problem arises when she feels and sees her nose growing enormously long (like Pinocchio), though no-one else can see it. But not only her — the whole class is afflicted — big head / long ears / wide mouth / long hand / goggling eyes / and the 'catty tail' which the teacher, Miss Wharton tries to tuck away surreptitiously.

The whole class is in turmoil, the magic is at work, and though this story is not as 'dark' as the first, there is a regulating factor of good (to do with an ancient toby jug) which causes all the confusions to work together for good at the last. For as Marleen comments as the end of the story, while rubbing her ordinary nose once again: 'Goodness knows'.

RAMON S.S.F.

Pilgrims Together

Children in the Way. New Directions for the Church's Children.
NS/Church House Publishing. 1988. £3.95.

Never, in reading this title, should we think this report is only about pre-adolescent young people. This report from the General Synod Board of Education gives us a pattern for parochial ministry that, if understood and applied, would revolutionise practice in parochial ministry. Which, of these models is nearest the biblical picture of the early church — the School Model, the Family Model or the Pilgrim Church Model?

The School Model suggests that adults have the answer and are secure in their delivery of the faith to the young. The Family Model suggests exclusivity and that everyone has an ideal view of the family. The Pilgrim Church Model is an image of a group setting out together, fit, lame, young and old, fast and slow, to find the Holy Grail, using everyone's skills and recognising everyone's limitations.

This thesis is the kernel of the pre-

sensation. Obviously the working party was concerned with children in the church, but they are also addressing the fundamental truth that the method of proclamation is stronger than the message. If the church fellowship is seen as self-righteous or exclusive then that is the perceived truth about it, whatever the message may be. If the church fellowship is seen as a group of excited adventurers seeking and searching for truth, then that is the message that will be heard.

It is easy to avoid the pedestrian issues of sharing faith with the young by addressing the great issues of the nature of ministry. It can also be dangerous, because a greater will is required to change a fellowship than an individual. This report succeeds because it recognises certain fundamental truths like 'the process of growth in faith is common to children and adults' and 'our understanding of

individuals growing in the church has been largely in terms of intellectual development rather than faith development'. These two statements stand the traditional pedestrian issues on their heads and a new process of thinking must begin.

This working party report moves the precepts of the church's ministry with the young (and therefore all ministry) from the Old Testament model to the New. Chapter 6 reflects on the roles of children in Israelite society — 'children were not seen as having any contribution of their own to make to the life of the community until they reached the age of being able to keep the Law'. Christ saw children as valuable participants in community as much as adults — so must we.

REV. IAN L. JOHNSON.

Salisbury Diocesan Youth Adviser for
Dorset.

Poverty and Obedience

Reform and Division in the Franciscan Order (1226—1538). *By Duncan Nimmo.*
Capuchin Historical Institute, Rome. 1987.

It sounds rather like a special subject for 'Mastermind', but it would take considerably more than 'two minutes starting from now', and indeed more than a short book review to do justice either to the subject or to this scholarly but very readable book. The author tells us it began life as a Ph.D. thesis twenty-two years ago, and has been worked on since that time. The end product is a closely argued and closely documented 658 pages of text, to which has been added an excellent 15 page bibliography of the Franciscan literature in the major European languages right up to 1985, some useful maps and illustrations, and a good index. The whole is an absorbing and interesting read for anyone who wants to know more of the history of Franciscan thought and life.

Chapter 10 of the 1223 Rule commands the brothers to obey their Ministers 'sav-

ing only what may be opposed to their conscience or our rule' and in the 'Testament' S. Francis forbids his brothers to put glosses on the Rule or to seek Papal privileges. Even within his lifetime there were those who felt the observance of the rule 'sine glossa' was virtually impossible. Those who followed Francis in great numbers gave rise to what is neatly phrased as the problem of 'routinisation of charisma'.

The development of the Order, with its tensions and divisions — in many cases the problem of reconciling obedience and poverty — is a sad story in many ways. Mr. Nimmo studies and seeks to understand with equal thoroughness the Spirituals, the Fraticelli and similar groups, the Conventuals, the Observants and smaller reform group. He traces in great detail the events and influences, particularly the Spiritual ideal and the Francis-

an literature which preserved it, which led to the final division of the Order into the three families we know today as Friars Minor, Conventuals, and Capuchins, but it is not just a historical chronicle of events, it seeks also to understand the dynamic which lay behind their interaction, and in due course to the parting of the ways. Mr. Nimmo sets out to look at all this in a non-partisan way. He argues that logically the definitive date was not so much 1517, the separation of Conventual and Observant, but 1528, with the foundation of the Capuchins, in which he sees the survival of the early strict observance of those who sought to live out the Rule of Francis to the letter, without the mitigations of

papal declarations.

All this could be so abstract and academic, but Mr. Nimmo manages to keep the human, personal side. We remain conscious of good, devout individual men as they struggled with the divergence of views about the level of observance.

He traces the history from 1229, the death of Francis, to the definitive division in 1528. There is a good overview of the question in his introductory pages, and a clear, helpful summary of the argument in his conclusion. Not exactly the lightest of bedside literature, but a splendid book — very readable and very enjoyable. It is published by the Capuchin Historical Institute in Rome.

God's Story

Theology from the Womb of Asia. By C. S. Song S.C.M. 241pp. £8.95.

In a rather difficult article on the paschal mysteries Herbert McCabe notes that when you try to bring deep simplicities to the surface you have to be complicated about them. If you ignore that necessity you end up substituting slogans for the truth. Aversion to theological sophistry and preference for a simple gospel began in the Garden of Eden and has had many worthy advocates. In this book C. S. Song adumbrates an escape from arid theology in the name of a genuinely Asian theology. Under the headings 'Imagination', 'Passion', 'Communion' and 'Vision' he sketches directions for such a theology, making liberal use of story and parable.

This kind of theological approach is always enriching, as the stories of the Hasidim, or Koyama's *Waterbuffalo Theology*, demonstrate.

I have to confess however to three serious difficulties with the book. The first is that this theological method easily becomes sermonising, and sermons so often teeter on the border of the platitudinous: 'This volcano of passion that a

mother goes through at childbirth is not merely a physical passion. It must be a deeply spiritual passion also . . . We have barely begun to explore theologically the volcano of passion that a mother experiences at childbirth' (Has Professor Song read Luther or Barth? one wonders.) Can parables be generalised into a theological method? Is it not of the essence that they stand as erratic blocks, challenging all our attempts to systematise? To say that, however, is not to say that the effort to systematise is unnecessary or illegitimate.

A second difficulty is that Song believes in abstractions which he calls 'the Asian mind', 'the Semitic mind', and presumably the 'European' or 'Western' mind. 'Ours is a culture shaped by the power of imaging, not by the capacity to conceptualize . . . Unfortunately a culture created in the West by the power of abstraction has taken control of the Asian theological mind'. What is particular, and what is universal for homo sapiens? How profound, really, are cultural differences?

Beyond the legitimate need to cherish real differences of approach lies the poison of racism, with its 'fundamentally different, and what's more, better, or worse'. We have to work much much harder on the universal and particular in order to see how different cultures might bring the truth of God to expression than Song is prepared to do, at least in this book. Belief in regional minds precludes this genuine and necessary quest.

The third difficulty is that from a rather populist position Song wishes to disallow one way of doing theology ('cold doctrines, rigid laws, menacing taboos') and to universalize another. But surely we need both the attempts at systematic reflection, the Sentences, the Summae, the Dogmatics, and the monograph or essay, and the parable and story (as Barth and Lonergan, amongst others, have argued)? Song ends with this rather beautiful description of theology: "Theolo-

gy is poetry in the prose of the people. It is God's hymn in the songs of men, women, and children. It is God's story in the parables and folktales of our brothers and sisters. Theology is God's mask dance played in the mask dance of those who, in the darkness of night, long for the approach of dawn'. Surely it is: but might not this mask dance include Anselm's debate with Gaunilo, Aquinas' thirty year wrestle to see things whole, Luther's endless commentary and impassioned polemic, Barth's constant beginning again? Song protests the danger that this be taken as theology, and the rest as simply incidental. The question is what really helps bring the deep simplicities to the surface, and how we are returned to the mystery of God and my neighbour. And to this question there is, alas, no simple answer.

TIMOTHY GORRINGE

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD.

Conference Papers of Significance

Tradition Renewed. The Oxford Movement Conference Papers.

Edited by Geoffrey Rowell. Darton, Longman & Todd. £12.95

Several books on the history of the Oxford Movement have been written during the last 150 years since John Keble's momentous sermon in the University Church at Oxford. This sermon challenged the *status quo* in such a way that the Movement which then began so changed the face of Anglicanism that there are very few corners of the Church of England where its influences have not in some way been felt.

Yet the whole ecumenical scene has brought another dimension into English church life, and gratitude for our past heritage, which the 'Oxford Fathers' revived, is probably not as striking a feature of the Anglican thought as was the case in earlier years of this century. A book with the title *Tradition Renewed* is not necessarily what modern Christians are looking for.

But this is not just another history book, nor is it an uncritical nostalgic look at the past. It consists of 15 papers which were written for the 1983 Conference, and its thrust is positive and forward looking. The editor is Chaplain of Keble College, Oxford, who played a large part in organising the Conference. The contributors are 16 theologians, and potted biographies are given of all except one (we hope that it was simply an oversight which excluded Peter Toon) and there is a foreword by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

It is difficult to review briefly and yet collectively a series of articles by different authors, and it seems best to comment on particular items which at least one reader has found specially helpful. It may cause no surprise that the contribution which made the greatest appeal is that by

Brother Barnabas S.S.F. on *The Bible and the Call*, outlining the biblical roots of the monastic life, a longer version of which was published earlier. Barnabas points out that the monastic tradition is rooted in the Gospel, and that S. Antony, the 'founder of monasticism' studied the Scriptures not in order to acquire information 'but in order to know Christ'. He maintains that the religious life 'is a sign to the rest of the Church of the discipleship which is incumbent upon all', and that we should be 'deeply thankful to the Oxford Movement for the revival of the religious life in our Church'.

There is an excellent article on the spirituality of the Oxford Movement by Dr. Borsch of Princetown University, in which he says that John Keble had told Thomas Arnold that he could best cure himself from doubt 'not by reading and controversy, but by holy living'—advice which needs pondering! The Revd. Louis Weil tells us that some contemporary theologians speak of Vatican II as 'New-

man's Council', demonstrating that some of the teaching that Newman gave in his Anglican days shows how wisely prophetic he had been.

The Revd. W. S. F. Pickering of Newcastle University writes of the decline of old-style Anglo-Catholicism, which he traces to its inability to create a distinctive form of catholicism, though he emphasises that the promoters of the Oxford Movement set out to teach that the Church of England by its very nature is truly Catholic. The authors of *Tradition Renewed* agree that the 'Oxford Fathers' very largely succeeded in gaining recognition for this thesis, though Canon A. M. Allchin is right to emphasise that the Second Vatican Council must now be seen as yet another turning point in the long history of the Christian Church.

This book provides much stimulating reading, and is to be recommended.

MARTIN S.S.F.

Dark Glory

Tree of Glory. By *Gonville ffrench-Beytagh*. Darton, Longman and Todd 1988, 94pp. £3.50

It should not be surprising that Gonville ffrench-Beytagh, whose name most of us associate with resistance, for the sake of love, to the South African policy of apartheid, is dealing in this latest book with the same deep eternal theme under a different guise. Here ostensibly he is offering a series of meditations on the Cross of Christ, tracing what another teacher of prayer has called the 'scarlet thread'—foreshadowings of the Cross—through the Old Testament; reflecting on the words from the Cross and on what Christ was in fact achieving there; rejoicing in the 'dark glory' of the Crucifixion and the 'blinding, blazing glory' of the first Easter morning. But the real strength of this book lies in its author's

having plumbed the depths, in his own life, of what it means to love and his ability to share his learnings with the rest of us.

Christ's death on the Cross, writes Canon ffrench-Beytagh, is the 'final demonstration of the length to which his love will go.' What we see on the Cross is, he says, 'the only kind of love—something that bleeds and dies and is wholly given to the object of love.' The policy of apartheid, on the other hand, is 'the exact opposite of the Christian gospel,' the destruction of *koinonia*, coming-together-ness.

It is his vision of the communion of saints that lends this book power. We do nothing of ourselves, for ourselves alone.

The Church is 'the company of the beloved.' Every act of adoration that any one of us may make 'must lift up the creation and God's creatures,' and especially our brothers and sisters in Christ. And every time a priest celebrates the Eucharist—itself 'the greatest form of intercession'—he does so 'for the world, for the parishes, for you and me and all the people who are not there.'

In the most moving section of the book, a chapter titled 'Prayer with Christ Crucified,' Canon French-Beytagh describes how every morning of the period he spent in solitary confinement in Johannesburg he celebrated Mass, in 'the presence of the

Church, both in heaven and on earth.' 'I took nothing in my hands,' he writes, 'and I said, "This is my body, which is given for you" . . . And again I took nothing in my hands and I said, "This is the blood of the new testament . . ." ' And his witness is that the communions he received in his prison cell 'were as real and as glorious and as triumphant and as magnificent as any communion I've ever received in my own cathedral.' No wonder, then, that his book echoes with such intensity of feeling the words from Isaac Watt's hymn, 'Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all'—and inspires us to a like response.

A TERTIARY

Means of Grace

Signs of Faith, Hope and Love: The Christian Sacraments today.

Edited by John Greenhalgh and Elizabeth Russell. St. Mary's Bourne Street.

Like previous collections of tracts from St. Mary's Bourne Street this collection has much that is stimulating and worth reading.

It consists of ten articles by different writers and a useful Bibliography, with comments, by Professor Henry Chadwick. Like all such collections there is untidiness—different authors covering similar ground, wide diversities of style and approach, but the generally high standard of each piece makes for a readable and useful little book.

The book opens with three excellent and complementary articles by Michael Hollings, Christopher Colven and Michael Richards which all have something of the nature of meditations or reflections on sacraments generally and which together serve to set the subject of sacraments in a wide context.

Rowan Williams' article on *The Nature of a Sacrament* is typically scholarly yet faithful and prayerful, maintaining the reflective style of the earlier articles. As a result Michael Moreton's contribution comes as a cold blast! It is a polemical,

strongly argued and scholarly attack on the Eucharistic Doctrine of the A.S.B. (and behind it the various editions of the B.C.P.) for its lack of a clearly expressed sacrificial offering within the Eucharistic Prayers, which doctrinal omission, he argues, undermines the language of the whole rite. Many will agree with him, but unfortunately many who reject the notion of Eucharist Sacrifice will not be convinced by his copious quotations from Latin, Greek and Syriac rites. They do not doubt that Eucharistic Sacrifice played a large part in the theology of the medieval and earlier church. They simply doubt whether such a theology is right.

The rest of the book consists of articles on each of the seven sacraments. John Macquarrie tackles Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist with some timely remarks about reverence and the indiscriminate use of sacraments. Norman Autton deals with healing and anointing, with a useful discussion of the theology of healing as such, as well as of the use of oil, preparation and aftercare. John Gill- ing charts and welcomes the broadening

and de-institutionalising of the sacrament of Reconciliation while noting the continued absurdity of the C. of E.'s lack of an official rite within the A.S.B. Matrimony is tackled sensitively and gently by David Burgess. Finally Martin Dudley looks at Priesthood rather than orders generally. He did this deliberately but this reviewer, at least, feels that the

result is therefore very lopsided. As a recent report on the Diaconate before the General Synod pointed out, deaconing (serving), is the foundation of all ministry and if you didn't get that right then the theologies of Priesthood and Episcopacy will not be right either.

GORDON SLEIGHT.

Blessing into Meaning

Looking Before and After. By Helen Oppenheimer. Fount Paperbacks 1988, 160pp. £2.95

In his Foreword to this Lent Book for 1988, the Archbishop of Canterbury expresses the hope that its contents 'will make all who read it think,' and so be led into prayer. Certainly for those of us unconversant with modern philosophical theories, or perhaps unaccustomed to thinking analytically, *Looking Before and After* will represent a challenge, a summons to mind-stretching, horizon-expanding effort. Helen Oppenheimer is here dealing with matters that concern each of us more intimately than perhaps we like to think as a rule—matters pertaining to the nature of our life here and hereafter, our nature and destiny as human beings.

Happily for any who find themselves in unfamiliar territory, reading her book, Helen Oppenheimer writes with wonderful lucidity and precision. One of her most striking gifts as a writer is her ability to weave apt poetic quotations into her argument; these have the effect of giving concrete and immediate form to abstractions the average reader might otherwise fail to grasp. Thus she leads us patiently through a review of current thinking on such perennial theories as materialism and dualism, along the way ably elucidating Gilbert Ryle's 'dogma of the Ghost in the Machine.' Eventually we find ourselves arriving on more familiar biblical, theological ground, but with a widened perspective and a new depth of in-

sight that would not have been possible without this careful passage through the realms of theory.

Throughout the book Helen Oppenheimer has emphasized our value as human beings, 'crashed the philosophers' fact/value barrier'—'not negligently,' as she says, 'but in the hope of showing that it is both needless and hopeless to remove all that really matters from people and then expect them to survive.' She argues that we are 'patterns of lovability' which, though we die, yet shall live through the mercy and power of God. Ours is a world in which, we believe, physical elements—bread and wine chief among other things—can be consecrated, 'blessed into meaning'; on this analogy, then, we may understand resurrection as 'the fulfillment in which the pattern of each person shall again become presence, our own real presence of which we may each say (perhaps in surprised delight), "This is my body".'

In encouraging us to look our hopes as well as our fears squarely in the face, Helen Oppenheimer challenges us to let go our jejune pre-suppositions about life 'before and after,' to confront the fact that there can be 'no short-cut to bypass the Cross,' and for all that to continue on our way rejoicing. Reading her book is thus a valuable exercise for Lent or any other season.

A TERTIARY

One Little Way

A Doorway to Silence: The Contemplative Use of the Rosary. By Robert Llewelyn. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1986. 84pp. £2.95.

In many ways a sequel to Father Llewelyn's earlier book *Love Bade Me Welcome* (1984), *A Doorway to Silence* is intended for those who use (or are willing to learn to use) the rosary as a 'way in' to the prayer of silence. It has been written in the hope that in the practice of the rosary and in the silence that lies beyond it, 'a surge of new spiritual life affecting Church and nation may be generated'.

The odds may be in favour of this aim, for *A Doorway to Silence* is an inviting and an encouraging little book. Attractively presented in a format similar to that of the popular *Enfolded in Love* series which Father Llewelyn edits, it offers a wealth of information — practical suggestions, apt quotations from the world's great teachers of prayer, striking insights into the nature of the 'silence beyond' — in manageable segments, a page at a time. Most of these sections are so densely written as to invite considerable reflection; at points it seems that each might profitably be expanded to much greater length, for this is a book of which every rift is loaded with ore.

As a teacher of prayer, Robert Llewelyn

is deeply reassuring. 'In prayer it is the inclination of the heart to God which alone matters', he writes. 'If you are saying the rosary and *intending* to pray, you are praying whether you feel that way or not'. Distractions arising during prayer are for healing, he claims: very likely 'something creative is coming to birth'. Even falling asleep in the midst of prayer receives his gentle approbation: 'those who have the gale of the Spirit', he quotes Brother Lawrence as saying, 'go forward even in sleep'!

As readers of his previous books will know, the basic premise on which all of Father Llewelyn's teaching rests is the doctrine of Julian of Norwich that there is no wrath in God. 'If you are off target in your vision of God, your prayer life will suffer accordingly', he writes. 'A right understanding of the nature of God's love is essential if prayer itself is to be authentic'. In *A Doorway to Silence* Julian's 'true theology' illumines every page: the rosary is one 'little way' into the silent heart of God's compassionate love.

JEAN-ALICE KOCH.

Solidarity

Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation. By Marc Ellis S.C.M. 147pp. £6.95.

This is an important book. It is not, as its title might suggest, yet another author or section of the religious community trying to jump on the Liberation bandwagon. Rather, Ellis, who is Director of the Institute for Justice and Peace at Maryknoll, and a practicing Jew, is seeking to understand how it is possible for people who have the Holocaust as their past to oppress others, as the State of Israel currently oppresses Arabs within its borders. It has, therefore, two major themes:

the question of how liberation, rather than revenge, bitterness and hatred, can emerge from the Holocaust, and secondly what the search for liberation means in terms of building bridges with other communities, especially with Christians. The immense importance of both themes will be immediately obvious, and Ellis writes briefly, succinctly and cogently. He introduces us to the complexities of the contemporary Jewish debate, the varied responses to the Holocaust, to Israel, to the

issues raised by feminism, and to the issue of revolution. He finds the possibility for a liberating reconstruction of Jewish life in Hillel and Buber, both of whom have the most profound vision of redemptive solidarity.

The importance of this for Christians is twofold: first, it becomes more and more clear that Christians have to respect Jews and Judaism as members of the same covenant. The idea that the Church has somehow 'taken the place' of Judaism in God's redemptive purposes has to be shed. We are kindred, travelling in the same direction on different but frequently intersecting roads. If there is a God, and if God is the Father of Jesus Christ, then Christians will always have to learn the fundamentals from Jews, past and contemporary. We follow and accompany

with our own glad witness to the Jew Jesus, crucified and risen. Secondly, the idea of solidarity, one of the translations offered for the Hebrew word 'hesed', is somewhere very near the heart of what God is doing to redeem us. 'Solidarity' writes Ellis, 'is the movement of the heart, mind and body toward those who are suffering . . . It is an attempt to reclaim our own humanity, bruised and alienated when our lives are built on the exploitation of others. This is true of a solidarity with our own community as well, for the journey toward others is at the same time a journey toward the foundations of one's own community'. The theme of Ephesians, perhaps? A book to be meditated and shared by both Jews and Christians. TIMOTHY GORRINGE.
ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD.

Beauty of Holiness

The glory of the Lord. A Theological Aesthetics:

Vol. 1. Seeing the Form. 1982.

Vol. 2. Studies in Theological Style: Clerical Styles. 1984.

Vol. 3. Studies in Theological Style: Lay Styles. 1986.

By Hans Urs von Balthasar. T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh. (No price).

If you are attracted by the beauty of holiness, you may be glad to discover these three volumes. It is all too easy to be discouraged by the sight of large books with the subtitle *A Theological Aesthetics*. There is plenty in them for people, like me, who would not be able to criticize the theory as a whole. The first volume is concerned with the developments, in both Protestant and Catholic theology since the Reformation which have led to the neglect of aesthetics; the second and third volumes are studies in theological styles: clerical styles in the second and lay styles in the third. Irenaeus, Augustine, Denys, Anselm, Bonaventure, Dante, John of the Cross, Pascal, Hamann, Soloviev, Hopkins, Peguy — the names alone hint at the riches to be found here. For Franciscans the exploration of Bonaventure

should be a particular joy, and the section on Dante may demonstrate why he has been claimed for the Franciscan Third Order. 'Of all the great scholastics, Bonaventure is the one who offers the widest scope to the beautiful in his theology: not merely because he speaks of it most frequently, but because he clearly thereby gives expression to his innermost experience and does this in new concepts that are his own . . . At the origin lies an experience of *overpowering* by the fullness of reality, like a sea that emanates gloriously from the depths of God, eternally flowing and not to be restrained'. As for Dante, 'the great lover of every embodiment of form, of all radiant beauty, has no interest at all in the visible beauty of the Church on earth. For its beauty consists entirely in its humility

and obscurity'. And then 'At the centre of Dante's work stands his personality — in extreme contrast to Thomas Aquinas, with whom personality completely and intentionally disappears — a personality to which nothing human, but also nothing divine is alien, a personality that stretches out to the furthestmost limits of the cosmos and pursues its own Christian

fulfilment within the cosmic context of the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God'. These studies are readable and open up perspectives to which I hope to return many times, for these are books to be savoured and assimilated gratefully and at contemplative leisure (when that can be found).

A SISTER C.S.C.I.

Resurrection Central

Jesus Risen. By *Gerald O'Collins*. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1987, £6.95

Gerald O'Collins is a very competent Jesuit scholar who can write fluently and persuasively, but also with great intellectual honesty and fairmindedness. He regards the recent debate on the resurrection as much too limited in its range to do justice to the subject. He first shows how the main issues have been focussed by the work of the leading theologians of our time, both Protestant and Catholic. He then analyses the factors which are involved in making a decision whether the resurrection is a reasonable belief. He regards both the resurrection appearances of Jesus and the empty tomb as credible by these standards. But he is much more concerned to place this belief

in a wider context of Christian witness from the earliest times and personal experience in the present. Part of this witness is the fact—never adequately observed by dogmaticians—that it is the resurrection and not the incarnation which is the real organising centre of the New Testament doctrine, and which ought to be so today. Finally he turns to redemption and personal hope and from there to the larger concept of Christian love as experience of the resurrection mediated through the liturgy in the life of the redeemed community. This is a very good book and timely. It is not always easy going, but it will repay careful attention.

BARNABAS S.S.F.

Living Word

Praying the Bible. By *Elizabeth Canham*. B.R.F. 1988, 112pp. £2.95

How can I use the Bible prayerfully? One way or another most of us ask the question. A skilled theologian may experience difficulty in applying scripture to daily life. An untrained person may have fresh insights but be unable to formulate them. With encouragement such a one could learn to relate the Bible message to contemporary situations. Whether we struggle to reconcile critical and devotional approaches to scripture, or whether we have not yet grasped the

value of Biblical criticism, here is a book which addresses readers where they are and gently leads them on into new discoveries. Whatever our tradition, whatever stage we have reached, Elizabeth Canham seems able to establish rapport with the reader. I for one am hooked. As with all the best writers on prayer, the words were lived before they were written down. She speaks with engaging candour of how much she has gained spiritually from wrestling with the cursing psalms,

and the value she has found in using the imagination in prayer.

Brought up in the Evangelical tradition of the Church of England, Elizabeth's spirituality transcends whatever was narrow in her background without discarding any of its strengths, notably its dependence on God's Word in scripture. The heart-searching that led her to seek ordination in America, at a time when it was denied her in England, must have deepened her spiritual awareness,

giving her present work an added depth. Elizabeth is now an Episcopal priest at Holy Saviour Priory, Pineville, USA.

The American edition of the book was published last year by Cowley Publications. B.R.F.'s new edition contains several corrections to the text. It is particularly gratifying to note that the appreciative foreword commending this book has been written by Bishop Michael Marshall.

BRENDA MICHAEL C.S.Cl.

Earthbound Saint

The Happiness of God. Holiness in Therese of Lisieux. By Susan Leslie.
S. Paul Publications, paperback. 80pp. £2.95.

This little book is witness to the writer's love and enthusiasm for Saint Therese of Lisieux; and so acts as a catalyst in our reaction with the personality of a generally over-sentimentalised figure.

For some of us with a liking for more robust sanctity, earlier writings about Therese may have left us wondering what the fuss was about. Were her sisters and family so determined to have a beatified member that they encouraged behaviour which we would consider naive, foolhardy, even bizarre?

Sister Susan Leslie indicates otherwise. Whatever the foibles of those around her, Therese is here portrayed as one possessed by such a desire to please God that she lived out the gospel in a manner remarkable for such an uneventful life. After a sheltered childhood, she entered a Carmelite monastery at the age of fifteen and

died of tuberculosis nine years later.

As the author here points out, Therese was 'an unusually earthbound saint; she had no desire for visions . . . (and) was content to find God in the ordinary stuff of every day' — a characteristic which must appeal. Her theology of the little way calls for true poverty of heart; not just *small is beautiful* but 'standing before God in truth' . . . 'like a small child who has not yet learnt the tricks of false humility'.

But we read on 'Therese did not simply remain a child — a spiritual Peter Pan . . . she *turned and became like a child*'.

If we are, then, looking for a saint with whom we can identify in ordinary life, we shall find inspiration as well as some salutary reminders in this well-researched and easily readable book.

ELIZABETH C.S.F.

On Reading the Scriptures

This is the Word of the Lord. By Sister Brenda Michael C.S.Cl.
Fairacres Publications. 75p

This small book is extremely good value for money, and will be a great help to all who seek guidance in the reading and understanding of the Bible. It is written in a very lucid style, and is easy to read,

though in the course of 24 pages there are great riches.

There is much valuable comment on the relative values of the different translations of the Bible that are now avail-

able, and we are advised to compare several versions in order to profit from differing insights into the meaning of the original text.

There are some very helpful practical suggestions, e.g. on the use of the Bible in private prayer, together with the recommendation that we should read over the Gospel for the Eucharist on the previous evening in order that it may sink into the subconscious, and that a scheme of reading such as that provided by the Bible Reading Fellowship can be very beneficial.

There is also some good theological teaching on the meaning of 'The Word', giving us some insight into the Hebrew and Greek background, and explaining

how S. John thought of the eternal Son of God as the Word. There is also an excellent chapter on the *Opus Dei*, God's Work, i.e. the divine office, in which there is a question mark against the prevalent practice of omitting some of the more difficult ('square-bracketed') verses of certain Psalms, since these very passages could help us to see the reality of the pain and the anguish of the world in which we live.

We welcome this small book, which is worth its weight in gold. It is to be hoped that it will be found on the bookstalls of parish churches, and that our congregations will be urged to read it.

MARTIN S.S.F.

Church and Gospel

Authority in Crisis? An Anglican Response.

By Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury. SCM Press. 1988. ix + 52pp. £2.95.

What more burning question is there for the church today than the question of authority? And, who is better qualified to address that question for Anglicans than the writer of this small book?

Needless to say, he has more wisdom than to try to answer it.

To quote from the closing pages:— 'If we Anglicans are wounded and shed some tears in the debate about authority that is no bad thing. We must not expect anything different from the Lord of the church whose glory was the cross. And

only if we have wept and bled ourselves will we be able to say something constructive about authority in the wider secular world'.

I believe that this book is evidence for the defence of a leader who has come under attack for failing to provide leadership, and that it is valuable background reading for all who will be praying for the bishops at Lambeth and then studying the reports. These reports will be part of the dialogue between church and gospel in which the search for authority consists.

ANSELM S.S.F.

Resurrection Now

Risen Today. By Bernard Thorogood. S.C.M. Press. £3.95

This book is an extended meditation on the meaning of the Resurrection of Christ in the experience of his followers in the modern world. It is very readable and thought provoking. The author alludes to the various controversies of the day regarding the historical nature of the Gos-

pel records of the events surrounding the rising of Jesus from the tomb, but he does not concern himself with the critical study of these records.

Bernard Thorogood is General Secretary of the United Reformed Church, and he admits that his Church members are

not given very much to credal statements' but he asserts their firm belief in the resurrection, saying that his own awareness 'has grown through people'. True to this statement, this book is not so much the outcome of theological speculation as of reflection upon experience. Nevertheless, the resurrection stories of the Gospel are integral to his main theme, though he warns us that those whose argument about historical facts is on the level of whether a whale could swallow Jonah are escaping from the real questions of life into peripheral ones.

This is a book of 113 pages which one can profitably read through at a sitting and then return to it again and again for

further study and meditation. Those of us who adopt theological standpoints far removed from that of the author will probably find some things rather distasteful, and especially in the chapter on 'The Breaking of Bread' where he dismisses the traditional Catholic teaching on the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament and speaks somewhat scathingly of 'first-class presences at the eucharist and third-class in the carol service'.

The presence of the Risen Christ is however such an unqualified reality for the author that people of all traditions will catch something of his enthusiasm, which pervades the 15 chapters of this book.

MARTIN S.S.F.

Four Booklets

Praying the Jesus Prayer. Remember Me. Life's Changing Seasons.

Praying the Bible. All by Brother Ramon S.S.F.

Marshall Pickering, £1.25 each.

Brother Ramon's profound spiritual maturity comes across in every sentence he writes. There are few intelligent practising Christians who would not benefit from reading one or more of these offerings. For some *Praying the Bible* will be more relevant; for others *Praying the Jesus Prayer* or the Stations of the Cross. All will benefit from pondering on *Life's Changing Seasons*.

Now to take the booklets in turn: *Life's Changing Seasons* is a powerful plea to us to take growth in the Christian life seriously. Far too many Christians have a static view of the Christian life. 'The work of salvation is not simply a "moment" but a process' writes Brother Ramon (p.29) — here is the key. The balance of different elements and experiences in life is beautifully expressed, and the author's breadth of sympathy is evident. My only query, a personal one, is that I have failed to find any 'sad melancholy' in Romans 8 — rather a yearning confidence that glory is coming. Hermann Hesse's superb short

novel *Siddhartha* is used to good effect. Maybe I resonated with this volume particularly because (as I learnt from *Praying the Bible* p.28) I am almost the same age as the author. The second paragraph on p.46 I found particularly moving.

Praying the Bible certainly will present to many a whole new way of approaching the Scriptures. The balanced view of the imagination was particularly useful.

Praying the Jesus Prayer is again a most helpful introduction to a way of prayer and contemplation being ever more widely used today. Brother Ramon shows wisdom in both his encouragements and his warnings. I found the section on the cosmic nature of the Jesus Prayer particularly powerful.

I wish, however, that a slightly broader canvas had been painted. The Jesus Prayer is but one of many possible Christian mantras — and I was surprised to see the latter word used in a slightly pejorative sense. John Main and his disciple

John Freeman, for instance, speak of the mantra 'Maranatha'; and even the Jesus Prayer itself is often abbreviated to a form which some find more helpful, e.g. 'Jesus, mercy', or even to the essence of it, which is simply the Name of Jesus. A bibliography of other excellent small books which are available on the Jesus Prayer itself (Kallistos Ware and Lev Gillet for instance) and on other mantras would have been useful.

The final booklet contains some suggestions for using the Stations of the Cross,

which will be useful for beginners in this way. The illustrations are helpful in their powerful simplicity.

The whole series of booklets is attractively produced. They are written with an elegance and an economy of style which are all too rare in devotional and theological writing today; and misprints are few (I only spotted two, both in *Praying the Bible*: p.15, line 13, and p.23, line 22). I hope they will be widely disseminated through church bookstalls and the like.

PHILIP SWINDELLS

Books Received

Church and Politics in a Secular Age, by K. N. Medhurst & G. H. Moyser, Clarendon Press, Oxford; **First Steps in Prayer**, by Jean-Marie Lustiger, Collins Fount; **Just Sharing**, Edited by D. B. Forrester & D. Skene, Epworth Press; **Prayers for Peacemakers**, Edited by Valerie Flessati, Kevin Mayhew; **S. Francis at Prayer**, by Wolfgang Bader, D.L.T.; **The Trial of Faith**, by Peter Eaton, Churchman Publishing; **The Wisdom of the Desert**, by Thomas Merton, Darley Anderson.

A Wayfarer's Dream

These lines were submitted by a wayfarer who stayed a night at Hilfield.

And I shall die some day
 When frosty light hangs low
 And tramps have ceased to walk in search of sleep,
 Where halo'ed stands some marble man
 Pointing the way that I have trod,
 Or when a gentle fawn comes down at break of day
 To taste sweet water where the half-hid river bends,
 Matching his infant nod and toe-tap in the slowly clearing grey
 My bones I'll stretch.

Launch on Warning

How many more years now
 Will we be flesh, warm, lithe and dear?
 For how much longer now will the sun,
 Like a child, tumble in our arms;
 Or the moon know our cheeks to kiss,
 Or the breeze wander lazily, moving
 Like a sigh through real hair?
 Will there be many days more
 To press the grass between our toes,
 And rinse our palms with dew?
 Is there time enough yet still to be
 Drenched by love, and with a rush of
 Joy throw back our heads,
 And gorge our eyes with stars?
 How much longer is there now
 I ask myself before the inexorable
 Cautery of flame, keen with madness
 And desire finally peels us free
 From waiting, and grafts us to the sky?

JUNIPER S.S.F.

Notes made in Finchley Cemetery 16 May, 1986

an angel with wings of marble
 set over a mound of mould
 tutelary of a forgotten soul
 who haunts the sunshafts

the green pointed holly bush
 overhangs a grave
 with a tub of primroses
 perched in its urn

the blanched spiral of a snail
 in withered grasses on a flat tomb

a skipping insect on my ankle,
 God is multifarious

a rose tree bedded in the clay of a man

buzzing insects in their element of air
 add a bass viol to birdsong

PETER SINCLARE

‘Francis, Build My Church’

What is this tale he told, the message he passed on?
 With stones begged from his neighbours, carried in his own feebleness.
 And then to build an edifice so strong —
 There’s music here, and poetry and joy and song,
 But where do we belong?

‘Build my Church’. What of the foundations?
 We pay so little heed, admiring the facade,
 Worshipping devoutly with such deep intent —
 And yet, what power here is lent
 To build the Church? Which Way is the path
 That leads by bricks and mortar to songs and joy?

‘Build my Church’. Anxiously we employ
 Our feeble brains that turn to dust and ashes
 As every enterprise suddenly seized, smashes
 To atoms . . . atoms and sub-atoms, less than nothing.
 And yet — and yet we dare again to sing
 ‘Build my Church’!

Only to find a wall
 Strong and broad and blank and utterly tall
 Across our path. Nor is there any gate . . .
 Only, beyond, within, the faintest music . . .

So often it is so.

One day we will be shown the proper way.
 Now we can only kneel and pray
 Minute by holy minute, day by day,
 As each struggles to build in his own way
 Believing. Perhaps this very wall is of His Church
 And we in praying strengthen and sustain
 The heavenly plan.

Teach us to desire
 Only your holy war, your love, your fire
 That all may be fulfilled, and Your Church built.

THELMA FROST.



Brother John at Glasshampton.

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THE SECOND ORDER OF THE S.S.F.

The Community of S. Clare

S. Mary's Convent, Freeland, Oxford OX7 2AJ. *Freeland* (0993) 881 225

The Chaplain, The Old Parsonage, Freeland, Oxford OX7 2AQ. *Freeland* (0993) 881 227

Monastery of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Stroud, N.S.W. 2425, Australia. (049) 945 303

The Poor Clares of Reparation

Poor Clares' Convent, Maryhill, Mt. Sinai, NY 11766, U.S.A.

THE THIRD ORDER OF THE S.S.F.

Guardian of the European Province: Very Rev. R. Pope

5 Wreath Green, Tatworth, Chard, Somerset, TA20 2SN. (0460) 20987

Note: *Sisters †Brothers †Administration

THE SOCIETY OF S. FRANCIS is a religious order in the Anglican Communion. It comprises communities for men (S.S.F.), women (C.S.F.), and enclosed sisters (C.S.Cl. and P.C.R.); and an order of men and women in the ordinary walks of life (the Third Order). It is involved in the contemporary world, seeking to promote unity and reconciliation and caring for the underprivileged. It is committed to the spiritual search in the Christian tradition, and seeks to follow the way of S. Francis of Assisi in humility, love and joy.